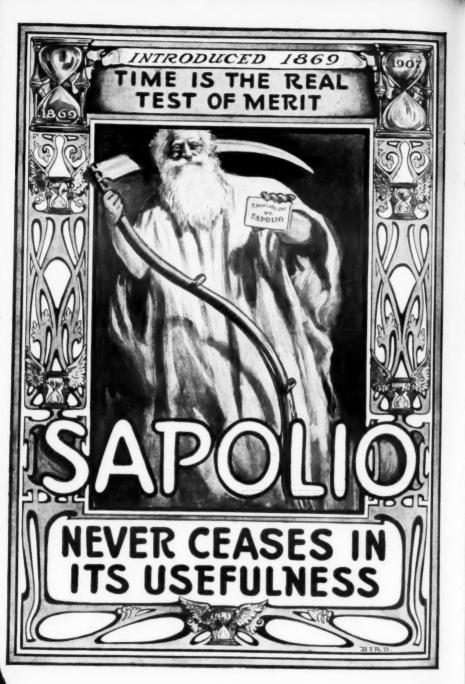
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AINSLEE'S

VOL. XVIn.

JANUARY, 1907.

No. 6.





IE road to the hospice, rising steadily after it leaves the town, scales high on the mountainside by the time that it is abreast of the old château; so that the prince, sitting alone

in his garden beside the tiny, foaming torrent of the Pique, cast a wistful, upward eye at the constant stream of slow-moving carriages and discordant automobiles which swept along the hillside above his head. Then with a quick gesture of impatience, he turned to confront an old man coming down the flight of mossy stone stairs that led from the château above—a little, weasel-faced old man, with a soft step and a shabby green livery that seemed as ancient as the quaintly coroneted buttons with which it was ornamented.

"La Flèche!" inquired the prince, "is Monsieur Kilbreth yet returned from the mountain?"

"Monsieur the American?" the old servant pronounced the word with a faintly edged contempt which his deference for his master barely concealed. "No, monseigneur, he is not yet come back." Then turning suddenly with a little sharp gesture: "Ah, but I deceive myself, and I deceive monseigneur as well. For here, good god of wood! here comes Monsieur the American."

His master turned, to face the approach of a tall, alertly carried figure, topped by a square brown face and a pair of dark, whimsically smiling eyes.

"Ah, there you are, Evan, returned at last! Old good-for-nothing! How long have you kept me waiting for my tea?"

For tea, being a luxury very chic, very English, and very inexpensive, was one of the few indulgences which the prince seldom denied to himself. The suggestion, however, did not seem to appeal strongly to his guest.

"Tea!" repeated the American plaintively, as he sank into the rustic garden-seat (overgrown, like all else in the spot, with the creeping lichen and decrepitude of years). "Which of us, I ask you, is the tea-drinker—you the Frenchman, or I the American? And, besides, do you not see that in our present ménage, tea is the most unsatisfactory, the most tantalizing drink that could be invented? Tea without a woman to pour it out—it's a birthday-cake without the ring; it's whisky-punch minus the whisky; it's the Lady

of the Camellias with the lady left out. No, thanks, La Flèche. No tea for

me!"

His host considered the matter for a moment, then suddenly brightening: "I believe, Evan, that you are right," he admitted; "and I have the generosity to own, that in this matter your perceptions show themselves finer than mine. No, La Flèche, no tea for me, Fetch us, instead, if you please, a bottle of the old Chambertin from the inner cellar."

As the old man glided away on his errand, his master turned his large blue eyes, filled with a melancholy humor, upon the abstracted face of his guest.

"Come, my friend," he said, "let us have the history of this, your first afternoon in Luchon! Whence flow those tender reflections, so foreign to your usual Anglo-Saxon stoicism? You set out, I believe, to climb the Mountain of the Well of Love. Your adventure—come, let us have it!"

The newcomer laughed, and for a moment a faint flush showed itself

through his tan.

"An adventure? Yes, Lucien, almost an adventure—almost, not quite! First, you see, I passed Colin the herdsman, piping his goats down the mountainside; and now and then laying his pipes aside to sing his little chansonette—about his shepherdess, and his love for her, and 'little pipe of mine, little pail of mine, little wether, little flock—"

Lucien nodded his head. "Yes," he said, "you have caught it very well, Evan—one of the old songs of our poor Gascony; an inheritance, who knows, of the Troubadours? Then the next verse goes on, I believe, about the nightingale singing on the bridge at

Lourdes--"

"Yes, yes!" cried Evan. "In fact, those were the lines which took my fancy; and I went on up the winding path of the hillside, trying to sing them to myself—on past the Well of Love, past the Chaumière, along to the little sheep-fold with a stone cross crumbling on the roof, and a brook flowing across the pasture. You know the spot?"

"Every rod of ground in the valley of the Lys and the mountains that enclose it," returned his host, "I know like the back of my hand."

"Ah—but you don't know, you see," retorted the American, "who it was that I found there, sitting beneath the laurels and the willow-trees, waiting

by the brookside!"

"Bah! you find that question difficult, my friend?" retorted the prince with lazy scorn, "Of course I know.

Colinette!"

Evan laughed. "How did you guess it?" he cried. "Nevertheless, Colinette it was: and even before I saw her. I heard her voice singing the same little song that Colin had sung. Now here is the marvel-her voice! A lovely contralto, singing always in the middle of the note-a nightingale herself, if you like, or one of the sirens. have been told that your peasants of the Midi possess the gift of musicand now, indeed, I believe it! So I waited and listened-yes, the song was the same; 'little pipe of mine, little pail of mine--' and so on, to the verse about the nightingale - then she stopped! And though through the willows and the laurel-trees she was hidden from me, I could hear her listening-listening for Colin. And Colin half-way down the mountainside, with his wretched goats! I was ashamed of him; I blushed for all my sex. Poor little Colinette! So as I have always been taught that benevolence, to be even existent, must be dynamic, I flung myself into the breach which yawned so distressingly. By good chance I had just learned the next verse from Colin himself-and serve him right! so I warbled two lines, in my very indifferent barytone."

The prince smiled. "I know!

"'S'il chante, qu'il chante, Il ne chante pas pour moi---'"

Evan nodded. "Yes. 'The nightingale sings not for me,' I sang romantically, like Leporello, while my knees trembled under me like the knees of a débutante at the opera. Then I stopped short, to face the great question: would

the contralto respond? I waited, I waited. What a noise that boisterous brook made with its tinkling, Lucien; and Colinette's sheep behind the trees, cropping away at the grass! Then, my friend, I heard her voice."

"Responding. 'Ni moi non plus, monsicur, je ne chante pas pour vous!' Is it not so, my friend?" inquired the prince lazily, as he lit a cigarette.

"Not so, stupid!" responded Kilbreth in triumph. "For she answered me, very softly and perhaps a trifle unsteadily, in the next lines of the song!"

The prince lifted his cigarette, beating time.

"Il chante pour ma mie, Qui est près de moi!"

he sang, in a clear, delicately cultivated tenor; and his friend recognized the measure with a smile.

"That's it, Lucien; that's it! The song is for my honey, for my honey at my side!"

"And the next moment," inquired Lucien, "you were at her side?"

Evan laughed and shook his head. "Listen; my cue was given, I made my entrance. I leaped the wall; I tiptoed through the laurels; I saw her sitting there with her back turned toward me, half-hidden by the green branches. And then, I give you my word, I could go no farther!"

"She was brown," inquired the prince with sympathy, "and bent, and faded?"

"She was not!" responded Kilbreth in exultation. "For, through the laurel-leaves that almost hid her, I could see the flutter of her white gown, the glint of her yellow hair—and, upon my word, I could have sworn that there was a breath of violet in the air. But, at all events, it is not the ugliness of that combination that would frighten away a gendarme, or even an American—is it now?"

"The flutter of white drapery, the shining of golden hair . . . a whiff of violet, a snatch of song. There are men," observed the prince meditatively, "who have braved the

gendarmes themselves for considerably

Kilbreth nodded. "So I said to my-self," he answered. "I had already stolen from the moment all the romance which I had any right to expect. For one moment I thought that I would speak to her—but she sat white and motionless among the green laurel branches, with the tip of her distaff just showing over her shoulder, and the white streamers of her coif floating in the little evening breeze. That pretty vision was enough for me-if I had stolen in on the little creature's confidence by mimicking her lover's voice, at least I would not add to my sins by stealing a single smile that should belong to him! I stood near to her-almost near enough, by stretching out my hand through the branches, to touch her golden hair! It was an enchanted moment—the moment choice, of opportunity. Then I turned, and tiptoed away, and leaped the wall again to the path of the Chaumière.

"So here I am, you see, home again and my moment of opportunity left behind me forever on the hillside."

The prince considered the matter gravely. "No," he said, "not left behind, but gathered in its perfection. You are an epicure in sensations, my friend. After all, she may have squinted, your Colinette!"

Kilbreth sighed. "Yes," he said, "I realized that fact, and for that reason, I shall wander no more on the Mountain of the Well of Love!"

"Chambertin, monseigneur!" The catlike steps of La Flèche had given no warning of his approach, as on the little wrought-iron table beside the prince's chair a clinky tray made its sudden appearance. The bottle was slender, tall, and wreathed in cobwebs. "A gift of the restored princes to my grandfather, this Chambertin," observed the host; "if you fancy it, my friend, you shall drink it every day."

Then, as the demure La Flèche with an adroit turn of his wrist transformed each goblet into a fire-hearted transparency of glowing red—"Come," cried

the prince, "to Colinette!"

With a careful consideration of the point, his guest raised his glass. "To golden hair and contralto voice, singing in the middle of the note," he said, "and to the remembrance of Colinette!"

II.

"I have been looking up at the road above me, Evan," observed the prince, "and asking myself how much chocolate and how much wine, how much scented soap and millinery have changed hands, to make possible this stream of dust and noise and petroleum which sweeps through our little, quiet valley of the Lys. Then I glance up at this poor château of mine"—and his handsome eyes, touched with their gentle melancholy, traveled to the wind-worn stones and crumbling hexagonal towers of his ancestral fortress. "And I tell myself. Evan." he concluded abruptly, "that had I cared to part with this ancient inheritance of mine, I, too, might have had an automobile. How much did they offer us for it, your American millionaires, La Flèche?"

Kilbreth glanced up in some surprise. "The ubiquitous American millionaire," he said, "you have him even at Luchon, bidding for your ancient

properties?"

The prince nodded. "The first American millionaire, so far as I know, to make his appearance in Bagnèresde-Luchon! How much, La Flèche, did they offer me?"

"Five hundred thousand francs, monseigneur, for castle and courtyard, statues and turrets, gardens and do-And monseigneur refused it. main. Ah!" And La Flèche heaved a sigh, half in pride and half in regret.

"A very fair price!" remarked the American, as with a smile the prince echoed his old retainer's sigh.

"Yes, La Flèche, though never in this world shall I have such an offer again for my poor acres and my ancient heap of stones, I refused it! Why, I hardly know; when I think, La Flèche, what that money would have bought for us! I might have doubled your wages, my poor old man-how . would you have liked that? I might have had some new English clothes from the Highlife tailor, on the Rue Auber, and I might have had my furniture re-covered-it needs re-covering badly, does it not, Evan?-in my apartment in the Old Street of the Little Daughters of God, at Saint-Germain. All this I might have done. Yet when I thought of Louis XIV. and my little ancestress to whom he gave this valley of the Lys; when I thought of my armorial bearings over the fireplace of the great hall, and the fairies-intimate friends of mine from boyhood!--who live here in the waterfalls of the Pique, I could not do it. Though my little ancestress, the princesse, I do not doubt, would have sold it in my place, and spent the moneyand so, perhaps, would the fairies, poor things! But I did not. Odd, do you not find it so?"

"Absurd, insane!" responded the American, holding out his glass for a renewal of the good Burgundy which La Flèche begrudgingly poured for him. "And yet, Lucien," he added, with something like a sigh, "it is what I should have expected of you. We are foredoomed to beggary, you and I. Look at me-if I could bring myself to write a letter of proper submission to my Aunt Ariana Vanrevel, Fifth Avenue, North America-if I could only sacrifice my pride and my selfrespect as you were called upon to sacrifice your castle-I suppose I might have a few dollars' spending-money, too. But here we are, with La Flèche to do the cooking, on something like ten thousand francs a year apiece. We are poor, because we choose poverty. Ah!" And with a deep sigh he drank

his Burgundy. La Flèche did not try to follow this "Monsieur the train of reasoning. American millionaire," he said, his tone implying a fine and delicate distinction between the gentleman in question and monsieur the plain American here present-"monsieur the American millionaire has taken the Villa des Quinconces, by the side of the Pique, at the far end of the Allée des Bains. Madame the millionairess, who rides past here every day in her automobile, has asked me many questions about monseigneur. But, ah! the seven sorrows of the Virgin Mother—the money is gone forever!"

"Yes, La Flèche,' retorted the prince, "that money is gone, and never again while we live, perhaps, will another American millionaire come here to Luchon. So now, you see, there are only two courses left open to you and to me, to gain an honest living; either to steal, or—"

"Or to marry, monseigneur!" cried

the old servant eagerly.

Kilbreth choked in his voice. "Ask him," he murmured, "if he has found her, the future Madame La Flècher"

With a side glance of faint resentment, the old servant pursued his remarks to his master. "Monsieur mocks himself not badly of me, monseigneur," he said discreetly, "but if a dependent may be so bold, then I will presume to say: Monseigneur has youth, monseigneur has beauty. He is, moreover, Prince des Ursins de Castelvielh-au-Lys. These are properties, monseigneur, which far outweigh all the scented soap and chocolate in France!"

And having planted his barb, the old man picked up his tray, and skipped nimbly off by the moss-grown path and the tall staircase of sunk and blackened stone. His master looked after

him with a sigh.

"In spite of jesting," he said, "in spite of scented soap and of laughter, I know well that he speaks the truth, that old man! Though it is the road of sordidness and of humiliation, what other way is there for a ruined noble to make his fortune, but by marrying? As captain of the Eleventh Cuirassiers. I draw five thousand francs from this sacred republic. which I serve. Add to that the tiny fortune left me by my mother-and still the result is meager, you will allow, for the descendant of the Princess des Ursins! Eh bien. what would you? Since my twentyfirst year, I have faced the same situation."

"Then serve you right," cried his friend, in disgust, "you a prince, a real prince, and all the poor little Chicago girls, with million-dollar bills pinned to their dust ruffles—pining, weeping real tears, to be princesses. It's not right on your part, Lucien—it's downright cruelty, that's what it is. If I were anything but a plain American citizen, if I had any title to offer in exchange for their millions, I wouldn't treat them so, the poor little heiresses!"

The prince shook his head, with a "You make a mock of me and my poor title, my friend. And yet, I cannot deny to myself that even in these latter days of the republic, my title as prince has a certain marketable value; and that the part of wisdom, doubtless, would be to realize its price. And yet"—he leaned forward, with a little air of confidence, and of gentle scorn for his own weakness-"and yet, I own to you, my friend, that three times in the past twelve years I have been nearly on the point of marriage with three different heiresses, all extremely rich and as beautiful. Yet, at the last moment, I asked myself: is it for my rank or for myself, for my beau nom or my beaux yeux, that this young girl is said to be willing to become my wife? No! I could proceed no further in the business-the honorable poverty of the barracks, alone with my liberty and my ideal, was better than such a transaction as I was proposing to myself. Look into the waterfall, my friend-do you not see her, my ideal?"

The American, who, according to the usage of his nation, was busy with his penknife upon some fragments of dried wood—the American turned his quick, dark eyes in the direction indicated. Across the slender white whirl of the falling stream, struck a yellow ray of the sun which even then was disappearing behind the dark-blue mountain above them; and in the mist of the waterfall hung a rainbow, airy, half-seen, prismatic. "Iris?" he asked, with a smile.

Des Ursins nodded. "Iris, Daphne, Undine, what you will!" he said. "When I was a boy, here in this ancient château with my mother"-he paused to cross himself devoutly; for the prince, an Ultramontane and Legitimist of the deepest dye, lost no opportunity of testifying his stanch adherence to the ancient religion-"alone here," he resumed, "with my mother and her director, who was also my tutor. I used, I remember, to lose no opportunity to steal down here to this garden by the waterfall, to seek for the beauty of which I had been reading in the pages of Froissart or of Homer. Why I came here I cannot tell you: but I assure you, if you will not laugh at me, that many was the evening when among the dark, bubbling shallows I saw the flashing of eyes brighter than any on earth; when from the falling of that foam a white arm beckoned to me, and I plunged in knee-deep-boys are absurd little monkeys !- to follow her, Yet when I came, she vanished. And the only token of hope that she ever gave me was sometimes to set her rainbow in that wreath of mist that hangs about her head. To-day I see it again. after so many years. Who knows, perhaps this time she will come to me in the flesh?"

The American rose to his feet. "Very well," he said, "we will give the lady a chance." And laughing, he showed two small hearts, roughly cut from the dried wood which he held in his hand. "This is an old trick," he pursued, "which my black nurse used to play with me when I was a child. How many afternoons have we spent, by the side of the little stream in my uncle's place in Westchester, carving hearts and marking them with initials and throwing them into the water!-and then waiting for them to come back."

"And did they come back?" inquired his hearer, with polite interest.

"One, I Kilbreth shook his head. believe, that the butcher boy picked up and used as a shield for the tip of his knife. But beyond that, not one returned. Still, the game is, that you must never lose hope! And some day you will see your heart again, on the bosom of your true love. That is the way, you see, that you will know her! See—one is marked with your initials. one with mine."

"Then you intend," cried the prince jealously, "to try and win my Undine from me?"

"Your Undine!" retorted the other. with scorn. "Mine, if you please, is for Colinette! There!" as with various fantastic gestures and mumbled incantations he tossed the two tiny blocks into the boiling stream. "When we see these two talismans again, we shall know it is the finger of fate pointing out the way for us. Let us hope, my dear friend, that Colinette, no less than Undine, has a million-million francs to

"You are sordid!" cried the prince, with a gesture of pained disgust.

The American rose to his feet. "Sordid?-of course I am sordid! I see it plainly, I must be commercial for us both. And in proof of the matter, my dear friend, I have resolved to take your case in hand. To appease your romantic spirit, I have just made your sacrifice to Undine. And now, for business!"

"What do you mean?" cried Des

Ursins, in alarm.

"I intend," replied Kilbreth firmly, "to be a mother to you, or even a maiden aunt. Yes, what you need is an aunt-a nice, discreet, energetic maiden aunt, to take your coronet into the market and get a handsome value for it. Yes, my poor dear, you need some one to take care of you! So at this very moment, I have resolved to devote this present portion of my goodfor-nothing life to a worthy and meritorious object-in short, to find an heiress for you, and get you comfortably, glitteringly married off!"

"Sh!" he Lucien raised his hand. cried, in alarm. "Take care, if Undine were to hear you!" Then, with a sudden flicker of seriousness behind the laughter in his large eyes: "Upon my word, Evan," he said, "we may joke, but as things are going, a wealthy marriage becomes for me a mere necessity. I believe you could show yourself a worse friend to me, than by doing as you say. Ah!" and he sighed to himself, as he turned back to his

waterfall.

The American picked up his long stick from the ground beside his chair. "I'll go out and look for her now," he said. "Have you any preferences, my dear chap, about age or weight, pork or perfumery?—I know better than to invite you, my lazy cavalryman, to join me in this footchase! But as for me, I must have another tramp before dinner—just a little tiny one; I won't be late, I promise you." With a nod, he turned away toward the long flight of stairs that led to the château above them; then, with a sudden thought:

"What was the name, did you say," he asked, "of those Americans who tried to buy the château of you, and who are now at the Villa des Quin-

conces?"

"I did not say," retorted the prince, with exactness, "but I will answer the question now; the name is Lonley—Monsieur the Colonel and Madame Reginald Lonley, of New York, North

America!"

know which."

"Lonley!" Kilbreth repeated the name to himself, "Colonel Lonley—yes, I have heard of them—yes, I know them, I am sure. Let me see, they have a daughter, haven't they?"
"I believe so," retorted Des Ursins, "a little girl or a young lady, I don't

"Bettina Lonley!" cried Kilbreth. "I wonder, now, can it be the famous

Miss Bettina Lonley?"

"Famous or not," replied the prince, "I am afraid I cannot tell. But why famous—a professional beauty, or does she loop the loop on a bicycle?"

Evan shook his head in slow reflection. "As for your first question, you have only to see her, my dear chap, for that question to answer itself! The crowd stands still on the Cinquième Avenue when she promenades down millionaires' row on Sunday afternoon—and in London, her photographs are sold in all the shops. And as for the other point—no, the loop was not for her; but last year, through no fault of her own, I dare say, she was the hero-

ine of a rather queer episode, that made some blaze in the newspapers."

"An episode—what kind of an episode?" inquired the prince, with languid interest. Kilbreth shrugged his

shoulders.

"The British milord that she was engaged to marry," he replied, "got the chuck from her, they say, just on the eve of the wedding; at any rate, he shot himself dead in her drawing-room, right on Fifth Avenue."

"What bad taste on his part!" observed Des Ursins. "But, then, these

other English-

"It was bad taste," admitted Kilbreth, "and as you can imagine, it made things rather uncomfortable for them. Their footing was none too secure in New York as it was, you see-brand-new millionaires, and all that sort of thing-and I fancy this affair rather finished them. And London, naturally, was no longer inclined to smile on them! So I fancy, they have come over to have a whack at Continental society." He paused. A sudden idea, flitting across his agile mind, lit his eves and mouth with a sudden gleaming smile. "Bettina Lonley," he said again, "she has millions, if you like, and good god of wood! as La Flèche says-she is a pretty creature."

But the prince, with an abstracted gesture and a half-uttered sigh, had turned back again to the airy prismatic gleams of the flying Pique. And Kilbreth, with the grin of the arch-plotter, fairly launched in the current of a new and delicious scheme, picked up his long, barbed stick and started

up the stairway.

III.

The highroad, winding along the mountainside above the château, was still dusty with its throngs of beating hoofs and swiftly whirring wheels. From the carriages and the glittering cars that flashed by Kilbreth as he trudged along the narrow bordering path, looked a moving show of constantly changing faces—all, however, of one predominant type, the high-arched eyebrows and the pointed chin, held

high in the air, that speaks of Latin blood. Long-descended French nobles, grandees from Arragon or Andalusia, ambassadors, prosperous vintners of Bordeaux—and, besides them, a more lovely sight, gauzy shapes of lace and silk and pale-hued muslins, smiling beneath airy parasols.

Now and then, in response to the salute of some acquaintance of the Boulevard, or friend of the Faubourg, the tall young American took off his soft felt hat in a quick salute, and with a smile that showed his handsome

teeth.

"But there's not one in the whole procession," he said to himself, "who is as nice as Colinette!" For somewhere in the back of his brain, that sweet contralto voice went singing. singing still; and behind the green wayside branches his eyes roved, unconsciously seeking for that flash of white and that glimmer of golden hair, which-as the prince had said-held enough of the mysterious charm of womanhood to seize and distract the imagination of a man. In spite of himself, Kilbreth's resolution never to return had begun insensibly to weaken. "It's nonsense," he said to himself, "for it's the finest view in the neighborhood. I am sure, from that Mountain of the Well of Love!" And he resolved that, merely to show his independence of such foolish notions, he would climb it again on the first opportunity.

Where the road swings around the jutting corner of the Mountain of the Black Eagle, there is a sudden parting in the laurel and turpentine-trees which border its windings; and upon this high-terraced pinnacle, it is the custom for automobiles and pedestrians alike to pause a moment, to survey the suddenly displayed panorama

of the valley of the Lys.

Just now, shadowed by the mountain barricades which rose black and tall between Luchon and the setting sun, the opposing line of hills towered a deep, dim indigo, touched on their rocky summits with a pale orange light. Over the narrow, winding floor of the valley between, hung a faint blue

haze, through which the slim, dark poplars and the gray roofs of the town showed delicately blurred, as by some drifting mirage. Cutting the valley with its thin, white line, lost here and there between rocks or misty, overhanging willows, raced the mad stream of the Pique, the voice of its far-away fret and fury lost in the soft harmony of the passing day. While at the far end of this high-walled, shadowy defile, like a flushed and rosy face laughing around the corner of a darkened corridor, the lofty Pic du Midi caught the sun's ruddy rays on its glimmering snows, and stood with its cold heights transfigured into a transient and glowing life.

"Well, I declare, if that isn't Mr. Kilbreth! I wonder, Mr. Kilbreth, is

that you?"

Turning sharply, Kilbreth saw beside him, on the floor of the projecting eminence, a characteristic equipage of the Pyrenees, such as had passed him by the score all the afternoon—an open victoria, drawn by four much-belled horses, and directed by a red-waistcoated postilion, riding one of the foremost pair. But the face which, between ruffled parasol and smart, white boa, smiled eagerly, and somewhat uncertainly, upon him-the lady's face, like her voice, was indescribably, unmistakably that of his own dear native land. Springing forward, hat in hand, he sent mad inquiries whirling back through the vague mists of his recollection.

"How do you do, is that really you?" he cried, with well-simulated cordiality, as he grasped the fat, white-gloved hand which she extended to him; then, in a sudden gleam, half-inspiration, half-remembrance of recent information, he added smoothly: "Mrs. Lon-

lev!

Upon the florid face before him delight blazed as luminously as the bright sun upon the snow-walled peak at the valley's end. "I thought it was you!" she said effusively. "Though, if it was, I didn't know whether you'd remember me! But still, in a far-away hole like this, all Americans are your friends, I

say. And I give you my word, you're the first Christian—what I call Christian, that is—that I've seen for a month. Oh, Mr. Kilbreth, won't you jump in and take a little drive with me?"

For a moment Kilbreth hesitated. "Please do!" urged the lady. "Perhaps you think you're too dusty, or perhaps you just think what a bore it will be to talk to me. So merely as an act of charity, please jump in! I'm just going around the corner of this mountain, to get a look at the sunset, which they say is the thing to do. I'll get you home in time for dinner, I promise you!"

With a smile of thanks, Kilbreth accepted the proffered seat at the lady's side. The postilion swung his long whip with the crackling snap which is the special pride of the Pyrenean guides, the harness-bells jingled all together, and the equipage started at a brisk trot up the sloping incline of the mountain road. Furling her parasol, Mrs. Lonley glanced with a perceptible satisfaction at the new companion at Indeed, from that satisfacher side. tion and from the slightly anxious deference of her manner, it was evident that this sunburned, careless young American who had trudged along so contentedly in the dust, was, in his own native land and in the eyes of his fellow countrymen, distinctly a Some-

"It's such a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Kilbreth," said she, "and I'm so pleased that you remember me, you can't think!"

"The pleasure and the honor, Mrs. Lonley," he retorted gallantly, "are entirely mine, I assure you!"

"Now, how nice of you to say that," she replied, with obvious gratification. "Oh, yes, to be sure, there's nothing like one's own people! We've been in Paris a whole year, now, you see, making it a special point not to meet any Americans—because the American colony—well, h'm, you know! I don't say we don't like the French society, because, frankly speaking, that's what we came for, and we adore it, all of us.

And we've got on very well, and been about a lot even in the Faubourg, you know, and that's something! But it's lovely to meet an American again, that it is. I declare, Mr. Kilbreth, we are quite old friends now, aren't we? And I could just tell you the whole story of my life at this moment, that I could!"

"Very well," answered Kilbreth, with smiling complaisance, "I am ready listening, only waiting for you to begin, Mrs, Lonley!"

In spite of the slenderness of their previous acquaintance, and in spite of the rather empty quality of her remarks, he was at the moment genuinely glad to be in her company. The broad, pink face, crowned by a gorgeous confection of white lace and plumes, radiated a genuine good nature and an abounding joie de vivre; the little, sharp, bright eyes, with their quick, darting glances, gave promise of a mind which, if not deep or of delicate quality, was at least keenly alive to the varying show which passed before them. And, more than all that, Kilbreth was sensible at the moment of the powerful tie of common race, of which the newcomer herself had spoken; in this faraway corner of the Pyrenees it was something, even to a voluntary exile like himself, to be able to make an allusion, if he so chose, to Sherry's or the Flatiron or Peacock Row!

"You're the first English-speaking person," observed Mrs. Lonley, "that is, outside of my own family, that I've seen since I've been in this place, and that's a month to-day. Italian marquises, Spanish duchesses, and the whole Epatant-they're all here, I think, making believe to drink the waters, and playing the little horses and automobiles every night at the Casino. Not that I ought to complain," she added frankly, "because that's why we came here. They told us, for the cream of Continental society, that Luchon is the spot! So here we are. The colonel detests it, he is never happy anywhere (poor man!) except on Broadway; but what would you? as they say here. So I try to like it, and as for Bettina, she just adores it, poor

child! And, of course, it is she, at present, that we must think of. You know my daughter, Bettina, Mr. Kil-

breth?"

The road dipping suddenly into the valley took them beneath a shadowy avenue of gray weeping willows, and across an arch of mossy stones which bridged the frothing Pique. Emerging on the farther side, they beheld the wall of mountains which bounded the valley on the west, cut by a suddenly revealed dip in the hills. "Behold, madame and monsieur!" cried the postilion, with a dramatic flourish of his snapping whip.

Above the lofty ramparts of forest and naked rock, silhouetted in deep sapphire against the glowing sky, there hung for a moment the glowing rim of a half-seen disk of flame. For an instant it paused and hovered, then like a fiery bird it swooped and vanished behind the dark curtain of the intervening hills. The sharp-cut mountaingap was filled with its radiating light as a goblet is filled with golden wine, and to the far end of the valley the lofty snows of the Pic du Midi changed from pink to a glowing carmine.

"After all," observed Kilbreth's companion, with a long breath of satisfaction, "after all, there is nothing like nature. That sunset, now-it's just like one of Irving's productions, only that you can feel that it is real, which I always say is an added charm. You can turn around now, driver," she added, in a laborious Anglo-Saxon French, "and go back home again!" She turned to the young man beside her. "Our car has the carbureter, or the sparkling plug or something out of order, as usual! So I have this affair sent up from the livery-stable, to take my drive in, all alone. For, you see, neither the colonel nor Bettina will come with me, they say horses are such a poor natural substitute for gasoline. Did you say you knew my daughter Bettina, Mr. Kilbreth?"

"Who is there in the eastern or western hemisphere," he retorted politely, "who doesn't know Miss Bettina Lonley? And, besides that, I have not only had the privilege of seeing her picture in the paper, I have even had the pleasure of sitting next her at a supper after the play—a supper given, if I remember rightly, by Lord Revelstone, at the Troc." He paused a moment, then added judicially: "She is

very beautiful."

Mrs. Lonley shook her head, with a little sigh. "Yes, there is no doubt, I suppose, about that. But it is a responsibility, Mr. Kilbreth, I can assure you. Not that I was ever troubled with that responsibility, in my own person," she added frankly, "though I suppose really that a great deal of money, such as I had, is just as bad, But a beautiful daughter-it's more worry than to have a family of twelve ordinary children to look out for. Especially when, as in Bettina's case, she isn't your own daughter really. You knew, I suppose, that Bettina is not my own child?"

"Indeed, you surprise me!" responded Kilbreth, with polite interest, and the communicative lady rattled on:

"Yes, the colonel was a widower when I married him-a widower with this one little girl. I was a widow myself, you see, with no children, so I was glad enough, as you may suppose, to take Bettina for my own. I always have told the colonel, in fact, that I made up my mind to marry him when I saw this beautiful little cherub of his, with her long, light hair and her big, brown eyes. I did want a doll, you see, to play with, and to buy pretty clothes for. So, since then, Bettina has been like my own child, and a dear child she is, too-though sometimes-sometimes-"

She paused and hesitated. Kilbreth turned toward her, smiling. "There!" she cried, in vexation. "If that isn't just like me, blurting out all kinds of nonsense, and talking about my dear Bettina as though there were all kinds of horrible secrets of bad temper and such hidden in the background. I only mean, you see—I only mean, she is a strange child! It is hard to tell what she is thinking of, what she wants and what she feels. She smiles at you very

sweetly, you see—but, somehow, all the time you feel that inside she is doing anything but smiling." With a little sigh, Mrs. Lonley paused again. "And this last year," she resumed, "this past year, of course—"

Her little gray eyes, with their unexpected acuteness of gaze, shot a quick gleam of inquiring intelligence at Kilbreth; and, accepting the sudden confidential footing on which her words had placed him, he nodded with undissimulated comprehension. "You mean," he said, "that since that unfortunate business of a year ago last Easter—"

"Yes, Mr. Kilbreth," she cried, in evident relief, "that's what you think of, that's what any English-speaking person thinks of, naturally, when he hears the bare name of Bettina Lonley! And between ourselves-though probably you have guessed it long ago -that's the reason that we are here in France. Though you must not suppose, Mr. Kilbreth," she added, in quick rebuttal, "that we are afraid, or that matters are any worse than they really are. I know people insinuated things, but there's no scandal attached to my poor girl. She did very wrong, I own to you, to let matters go so far -to accept poor Revelstone, and let him come out to New York to marry her, then the very day before the wedding to change her mind! Such a match, Mr. Kilbreth! a peer of James I.'s creation, with a house in Park Lane and the most gorgeous old abbey in Buckinghamshire-to be sure, mortgaged to the hilt, but I had made arrangements to pay off all encumbrances and settle it on my dear girl for a wedding-present. I did so want, you see, to be mother to a marchioness! But she changed her mind at the last moment, and Revelstone went off and drank himself blind and crazy, and then came rushing back to the house, to shoot himself dead at her feet." She shuddered and her voice took on the querulous tones of undeserved suffering. "It seemed hard, I can tell you, just when I expected to have the crowning glory of my whole career, and to be established firmly at last in both New York and London society it was pretty hard to hear the newsboys all screaming the scandal on the street, and to see myself and Bettina coldshouldered wherever we went."

In the depth of her grievance, and the comfort of a new listener, she had evidently forgotten how far she was committing her private confidence to the chance acquaintance at her side. And Kilbreth, frankly interested, replied, with unobtrusive commiseration:

"I have always, I assure you, felt the greatest sympathy for Miss Lonley

in the unfortunate affair!"

"Ah!" Mrs. Lonley shook her whiteplumed head. "To tell you the truth, Mr. Kilbreth, I think your sympathy is wasted on Bettina. A strange, coldblooded child, if I do say it. I don't think she ever cared that, if you ask me! But if you have any sympathy to share, Mr. Kilbreth, you can give it to me, if you like. Because I want to be somebody, I love society-and as I have the money, I want to dazzle-yes, to put it frankly, I want to dazzle! And I had done pretty well in New York, as perhaps you know, Mr. Kilbreth, when, smash! went everything under this wretched Revelstone business. And his being an Englishman, you see, made it just twice as bad-New York and London, two birds lost with one stone, you see! For when we left New York and went back to London-I own it to you frankly-we might have been Montana cattlerangers, for all the notice we got. The Revelstone affair again, you see, had killed us dead. Everybody looked on my poor Bettina as half-way between an Old Bailey murderess and a vampire. So across we came to Paris, where the story hadn't got round so much, and where, in any case, they think it quite the natural thing that a beautiful woman should have men shooting themselves dead for her sake. So here we are, real Parisians, you see, who come down to Bagnères-de-Luchon to drink the waters, as French as we can be. For it's perfectly plain, and I don't try to disguise it from myself, the one thing for us to do is to make a brilliant success, a dashing coup here on the Continent, and sail back into Belgravia and Fifth Avenue on the top

wave of it!"

She paused for breath, and shot her little, shrewd glance at the young man "Yes," she said, "I am beside her. going to be perfectly frank. The object of my life now, as it has been any time these last seven years, is a brilliant match for Bettina-but with this difference: Now the possibilities are narrowed down, so to speak, to a definite field, and the time-limit is more or less fixed. Not that Bettina is old yet, you know, but I admit she is no chickenand even beauty like hers can't last forever! Yes, I must see her a marquise or a duchess, some time before the new year. And I am firmly resolved, this time there is to be no nonsense.

For one moment her heavy, pink features hardened themselves into lines of a curiously ruthless resolve. Kilbreth regarded her with a little smile of secret amusement; all that he had ever heard of Mrs. Reginald Lonley, the multi-millionairess, the kind-hearted snob, and the furious tuft-hunter, was amply confirmed by the brief intimacy of this rather amazing interview. Turning, she met his smile, and laughed outright in sudden, frank recognition of her unconventional performance.

"I do talk a lot, don't I?" she observed candidly. "But it's being so far from home, I suppose, and being rather worried, and meeting you suddenly, that set me talking about my own affairs. So, now, Mr. Kilbreth, you tell me about yourself. You're living over here, an exile from home,

just like us, aren't you?"

With a hardly defined impulse, Kilbreth was moved to imitate her offered confidences. "Well, yes," he admitted, "I suppose you might call me an exile, and be in the right of it. Much against my aunt's wishes, you see, I came over here eight years ago, to study at the Sorbonne. I thought romance literature was my business in life, you see, and my poor aunt thought my business was driving a four-in-hand and

setting the style in buttonholes. I was so sure that I was right, you see, that I told her she might carry out her threat, and leave her millions to build a home for decayed fashion-leaders, or whatever she liked, and I would make my own way in the world. Well—I might have made a success of four-inhands and boutonnières, who knows? While the actual scope of my achievements, up to date, amounts exactly to a monograph on the poetry of King Réné, which nobody ever heard of, and a romance on Bertha Swan-foot, which nobody ever reads!"

"Then why," asked Mrs. Lonley, with the downright candor which seemed her most striking characteristic, "don't you go home?" And amused at the unqualified personalities to which their conversation had drifted, Kilbreth answered with equal directness:

"Because, Mrs. Lonley, the terms on which my poor aunt and I parted are not precisely such as to give me faith in the welcome I should receive, if I went home; nor even yet, you see, am I willing to abandon all my own ideas of life, to make them over even on a scheme which should bring me in terms."

million dollars!"

"Ah," replied Mrs. Lonley, "very creditable and very independent, upon my word, though I must say it gives any one an uncomfortable sort of a feeling to think of all those millions going to waste. And such a position, too, if you don't mind my speaking of it. For every one knows Mrs. Vanrevel is one of the pillars of the society of New York. Though, to be sure, she's looking sadly bent. I saw her on the Avenue last year, just before I sailed. She is looking greatly changed, poor old lady!"

"Poor old Aunt Ariana!" in the recollections thus evoked, Kilbreth sighed in a sudden pang of reminiscent regret. Then, suddenly, as the carriage-and-four swept around the jutting corner on the side of the Black Eagle's mountain, and swooped on its swift and jingling course down the hillside toward the town, Mrs. Lonley turned to the young man beside her with a

spasmodic return to the conventional necessities of the moment.

"You will let me take you back to your hotel, won't you, Mr. Kilbreth? Which is it, the Etigny or the Grand

Palais?"

Kilbreth shook his head. "For once Sherlock Holmes methods are at fault, Mrs. Lonley. I am not in town at all—but if you will tell the man to stop, please, at the gateway of the old château, on that crag below us in the valley—"

But he was interrupted by a shrill scream of amazement from the lady. "What! Castelvielh? The prince's place the Prince des Ursins? Do you mean to tell me you are at Castel-

vielh?"

"I certainly am," responded Kilbreth

tranquilly; "why not?"

Mrs. Lonley was slightly confused. "I don't mean to show surprise, Mr. Kilbreth, that you should be visiting any king or prince of Europe. But you see. Castelyielh-we tried to get that. It's a duck of a place—as I said to the colonel, there's blood in that place! And I could just see it with its donjon keep and its towers and its scutcheons all nicely restored and gilded, and the cloisters all covered with vines and Daghestan rugs, and electricity and water laid on. I just took a fancy to the old place, and I offered any money for it, up to a halfmillion francs. But the prince spurned my offer, absolutely spurned it! And so we had to go back to the town and buy a poky, ordinary little villa, on the Allée des Bains—not a bad little villa, that is, but I did want the château. Well, I didn't get it, that's all. The prince is a very charming person, isn't

Kilbreth did not reply at once; for a sudden idea, sown by the afternoon's conversation in the garden, germinated by the rambling words of the lady beside him, was already springing up and sprouting in a most wonderful manner. But he was discreet.

"Lucien des Ursins," he responded carelessly, "is beyond a doubt one of the most charming persons I know. Rather dreamy, poetical, that kind of thing—but a downright good chap, and they say one of the most efficient officers in the Cuirassiers; and if he would condescend to accept his popularity, one of the best-liked men in all Paris!"

"Ah," observed Mrs. Lonley, in a tone tinged with the deep respect she felt, "ah, I've heard of him, naturally, And I've met his aunt, the Duchesse de Rochemartin; she could talk of nothing but her preux chevalier of a nephew. Much good that did us! But I declare to you, you are the first American I have ever seen who had ever met him-though I know at least a dozen mothers, French and American, who are in hot chase!" These last words, with their obvious implication, were spoken in a perfectly unconscious innocence of self-revelation. family is really just about the best in France, if you leave out the exiled princes, who aren't in France-isn't it?" she added, with frank interest.

Kilbreth began to enjoy the situation. "The Prince des Ursins-de-Castelvielh-au-Lys," he replied impressively, "is lineally descended from the famous Princesse des Ursins; and when his uncle dies he can, if he chooses, assume the title of Duc de Rochemartin." He paused to observe the effect of this information, then added with

elaborate carelessness:

"He is here now, you see, on his thirty days' permission. As a matter of fact, he is gone into a kind of retreat, there in his old château. But if you will allow me, and if I can drag him out of his hole, it would give me great pleasure to present him to you, Mrs. Lonley."

For a moment there was silence between them, as under the dusky twilight of the turpentine-trees the carriage crawled slowly up its last slope toward the great, ruined gateway of Castelvielh. Suddenly Kilbreth felt a hand, light but firm, upon his arm.

"Mr. Kilbreth, you already think me a crazy old woman, no doubt, for the way I have overwhelmed you with my confidence. But since I have told you one-half, to nobody's profit in the world, I am going to risk going to the end for what may be of great advantage to us all. Mr. Kilbreth—" she paused and hesitated. The young man, laughing, took up the airy thread of suggestion which her words tossed to him.

"Perhaps I have some idea, Mrs. Lonley, of what you are going to say—perhaps, indeed, the same idea may have come into my own mind. Matches, they say, are made in heaven; but that is no reason, perhaps you were going to observe, why we should not give

Heaven a helping hand."

For a moment there was silence, as with shouts and a loud jingling of bells the postilion brought the four impatient horses to a halt before the gate of the château. Then Mrs. Lonley, leaning toward her neighbor, stretched out her hand with a gesture of solemn delight.

"Shake hands on it, Mr. Kilbreth," said she, "When will you come to dine

with us, you and the prince?"

Somewhat alarmed at this sudden clinching of the affair, Kilbreth caught his breath. He had begun in joke, with a half-conscious continuation of his joking words to Lucien on the subject, an hour or so before. But in spite of himself, the various eligible features of the scheme crowded into his brain, to the exclusion of all natural reluctance. And, moreover, the excitement of the match-maker had crept into his blood—the delicious sense of power, the delight of supplanting omnipotent fate by stepping in to order a fellow being's life in its most essential and far-reaching particulars.

He took the offered hand, and looked with frank understanding into the eager and determined eyes which met his

own.

"I think, Mrs. Lonley," he said, "that I can answer for it, we will dine with you to-morrow evening, Monsieur des Ursins and I!"

IV.

The Villa des Quinconces, like the Château de Castelvielh, was built of gray stone, by the side of the brawling Pique. There, however, the resemblance ceased; for, unlike the bare old towers of the ancient fortress on the upper waters of the stream, the villa was polished and perfected and ornamented like somebody's only child.

The broad stone veranda was spread with soft Eastern rugs, and twined about with flowering vines. From the open casements of the long windows shone flashes of gilding, the glimmer of rich embroideries, and the rosy radiance of shaded silver lamps. From the wide steps which led from the piazza to the green lawn below, sloped the garden, composed of an elegantly ordered tangle of satiny foliage plants and bright August roses. Beyond that again, behind the pale streamers of the weeping willows, murmured the liquid clamor of the swift mountain stream.

Mrs. Lonley, with a scarf of antique rose-point flung over her fat shoulders to protect them from the fresh, chilly air of the Midi twilightas the hostess, with her handsome husband at her side, received her guests in the little outdoor drawing-room which taste and money combined had evolved from the vine-covered veranda. She was busily greeting the arrival of two very desirable guests-a flashing, black-eyed Spanish duquesa and her elderly duque, to whom Mrs. Lonley had brought letters of introduction from a good-natured friend in Paris. They came to her with reasons of their own—the duquesa out of curiosity, her husband because he would go anywhere for a good dinner. In their manner, despite their elaborate graciousness, there was just the hint of patronage which Mrs. Lonley was always striving vainly to repel. Then the long, French windows which led from the hallway out upon the veranda were flung open, and the silky-voiced footman announced:

"Monsieur Kil-la-bret! Monsieur the

Prince des Ursins!"

Never perhaps since her calamity of a year ago had Mrs. Lonley known the glow of triumph, the pang of pure delight, which thrilled her stout frame at that instant. At last it had come, the moment for which she had for the past few months plotted, and pulled wires, and poured her money in a flowing stream—and now, behold! from simple accident and by the good nature of her young fellow countryman, here stood in her salon the distinguished, the celebrated Prince des Ursins; he who, in spite of the accident of poverty, was the best match and the most desirable name from the English Channel to the Pyrenees!

"So good of you to come!" she greeted the newcomers, with her best French and her best society manner. "Monsieur Kilbreth—Monsieur des Ursins—I am enchanted to see you!" And as the prince bent low in respectful salute over the podgy hand she offered him, she smiled her blazing gratitude into the alert eyes of her fellow conspirator, who stood demurely by.

In the changed manner of the duquesa, who from a half-veiled impertinence had turned to a suddenly deferential complaisance, she saw quick earnest of the value of her new acquisition. And as the remaining guests crowded in-a stray Italian marquis, a fat baronial widow from Touraine, and a half-dozen faded Parisians of both sexes, who had come to Luchon to drink the waters and whatever else might come their way-as the little vine-walled salon filled with a chattering and more or less starred and titled company, the hostess' eye wandered back in triumph to the two tall figures which towered so conspicuously over the rest of the crowd; to the handsome dark head of the young New Yorker, and the melancholy face, with its high features and vellow cavalry mustaches. of the Prince des Ursins.

"Where is Bettina?" she said suddenly. "Reginald, where is our little girl?"

Colonel Lonley paused for a moment's reflection before risking an answer to this question. He was a man of calm exterior and slow speech—and in every other way admirably calculated for his rôle of husband to the plu-

tocratic widow who had married him. Her florid dumpiness of face and figure were admirably offset by his Greekgod profile and high military figure: the noisy bustle of her manner could always rely upon his languid elegance to strike a proper balance in the mind of the spectator, and create an impression sufficiently near to that desired. The passive part in life, for which his wife's force and large possessions had cast him, was one which he found admirably suited to his taste and to his digestion. Her energy in his daughter's behalf was so indefatigable, that he had long come to regard the responsibility of the girl's future as her stepmother's, rather than his own. For the rest, he was an authority on rare bindings and Sudanese jewelry, played an excellent game of billiards, and formed a distinctly ornamental headpiece for the dinner-table.

"Where is Bettina!" he echoed, with a languid twirl of his white imperial. "It seems to me that I saw her, a moment or two ago, walking up and down in the garden. Ah, here she is!"

Kilbreth turned suddenly, to look down the wide flight of stone steps at a slender figure in shimmering pale gray, which, with a deliberate step and a perfectly unhurried grace, was ascending the stairway from the garden. With one white arm she held up the clinging meshes of her gown, to display a multitudinous whirl of gauzy ruffles and a slender foot shod in pale gray and silver. And above her milky shoulders, curved like the petal of a white geranium, shone the rose-tints of her lips and cheeks, the shining waves of her brilliant red-gold hair. For the flash of a moment, Kilbreth's quick eve noted a certain resemblance between the beautiful figure approaching him and the far-away snow mountain which gleamed through the trees behind her-a shape of misty luminous pearl, crowned at the summit by the vivid glories of the sunset.

This likening of the fair daughter of the house to a shape of distant and eternal snow was (Kilbreth made up his mind later) not so very fantastic,

after all. From his seat at the hostess' right he was well posted to observe the beautiful head, diagonally opposite to him, which rose like that of a nymph from the jungle of pink Algerian lotusflowers, mountain-laurel, and sparkling crystal with which the table was decorated. The perfect contour of her features, chiseled like those of her father in the purest marble outline, was not to be disputed; nor the Greek perfection of her head, displayed to admirable advantage by the low knot of her hair-dressing, and the Egyptian fillet of pearl and silver which bound her parted hair. Loveliness outright and undeniable was hers; yet, like that of the splendid snow peak to which he had likened her, of a quality to leave the beholder singularly cold.

"Yes," said Evan to himself, "she will make a very proper princess. Lucien will have the most beautiful wife in Europe, and"-as his eye went traveling from the gold plate with which the table was loaded, to his hostess' display of diamonds and the Lemaire panels of the wall behind her-"and, good heavens, how many millions? Yes, decidedly, my coup was an excellent one for all concerned!" Warmed by the substantial inward glow of the successful schemer, he returned his attention to the really supernacular dinner, and the dawdling pleasantries of the little Parisian on his right.

"No, no, monsieur!" she was observing sweetly, in answer to a bantering remark of his own, "it is not that we consider you so barbarians, you other Americans-mon Dieu, but no! Say, rather, overcivilized savages!" And she flashed her bright eyes and her wine-glass together at him, as with a nod she drank to his health.

"You flatter us, comtesse!" retorted Kilbreth, in mild amusement. The next moment his attention was claimed by the voice of the prince, leaning toward him across the lotus-buds and the pinkshaded candles.

"Evan, my friend, you must tell mademoiselle of your adventure yesterday, upon the mountainside. You must know, mademoiselle," he added, as he turned back, with a smile, to the stately beauty at his side, "that Monsieur Kilbreth is a great authority on these matters, the ancient songs and romances of our poor France. fate vesterday rewarded him by leading him to the side of a charming shepherdess, with whom (I breathe it softly!) he fell madly in love; and who, by way of recompense, taught him her little chansonette!"

"How delightful!" gushed Mrs. Lonley. "Now, if there's anything I adore, it is romance. And my daughter is just the same, aren't you, Bettina? Tell them, darling, about the little song that you learned the other day. How charming it would be if it should happen to be the same as Mr. Kilbreth's.

wouldn't it?"

The young lady addressed turned her glance upon Kilbreth, across the intervening flowers-large, calm eyes of liquid brown, touched with a polite in-

"Ah, yes," she said. "You see, I went up to the Chaumière in the funiculaire yesterday; so while the others were busy with those pancake things that they serve up there, I stole away to have a look at the view. And pretty soon, following up the course of the brook, I came upon the most curious little half-ruined barn there on the hillside, with crumbling stone walls, and an old cross, all tilted and broken, upon the roof."

"The little sheep-fold on the Mountain of the Well of Love," cried Kilbreth, "ves. I have been there, too."

She smiled at him across the lotusflowers. "Indeed," she replied; "a strange and charming little spot, is it not? Green pastures above on the hillside, with their poplars and their laurel-trees-it was Arcady, real Arcady! And to make the picture complete, there was the bergere herself, with her distaff and her little flock.

"Ah!" cried Kilbreth in delight. "So you met my Colinette, Miss Lonley?"

She stared. "Your Colinette?" she asked, and the little comtesse on Kilbreth's right touched his arm coquettishly with her fan.

"Come, monsieur, tell us all about it! Did she promise to be yours, and did she tell you that her name was Colinette?" She laughed airily, and from the other side of the table the prince turned his smiling eyes upon her.

"It was merely a piece of deductive reasoning on the part of monsieur, you see! You never heard of a shepherdess whose name was not Colinette, did you, madame? 'Tis a necessity of the métier, as all peasants answer to the name of Jacques Bonhomme, and all dogs come wagging their tails when you call Toutou! But as for her being his Colinette—on that point he must speak for himself."

"She is my Colinette," declared Kilbreth boldly, "since yesterday, she has taken possession here," and with a dramatic gesture he tapped himself on the heart—"she has nothing to say upon the subject, she is my dove and my beloved—ma mie, in short, as she herself

put it in her little song."

"Ah!" cried Miss Lonley, in a sudden faint showing of animation. "You heard her little song about ma mie, and the nightingale, and the little wether, and the little pail of milk?"

"Sing it, Bettina, darling," said her mother, then turning to the prince: "She really has a charming voice, you know, if I do say it. Her teacher in Paris is always urging her to go in for opera."

"Nonsense, mama!" interposed her daughter, but with sudden gentleness; then turned to Kilbreth for his reply.

"Yes, mademoiselle," he answered, with a smile, "that is the song, you have it very correctly. Was it my Colinette herself, I wonder, who taught it to you?"

She nodded. "Yes, I crossed the hedge into her pasture, and she very obligingly sang her song for me, not once but a half-dozen times. My French and her Languedoc did not agree very well, but we managed to understand one another. I congratulate you on your taste, monsieur! Your Colinette is a charming little creature."

"I am honored, mademoiselle," re-

torted Kilbreth, "by your approval of my taste. I will buy a crook, and turn shepherd myself, and live with Colinette in Arcady!"

"Send me cards, Mr. Kilbreth," cried Mrs. Lonley quickly, "I am dying to see her, your Colinette!"

"But unhappily," observed her daughter, with a shake of her beautiful head, "I am afraid you are too late in your wooing, monsieur. There's a certain young shepherd, you see, who rather seems to have a monopoly in that direction. At least, when I saw her, she was very worried and troubled, and finally in tears, for fear of missing her rendezvous with him."

"With that tiresome little monkey of a Colin?" cried Kilbreth. "No, mademoiselle, I assure you, you may contradict that rumor, if you hear the matter talked about! He's a worthless chap, they say, the poorest shepherd in all Gascony! He plays his wretched scrannel-pipes, while 'the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.' I met him yesterday, coming down the Mountain of the Well of Love—and I assure you, I have no opinion of him at all."

"This jealousy," interposed the prince, "is too transparent, my friend!" And Miss Lonley, smiling languidly, parried Kilbreth's attack.

"Take care, monsieur, remember that I bear a heart, as well as you. And if you lost yours to Colinette, why should I not be equally generous to Colin? And as a matter of fact," she added, as she helped herself to the wild mountain strawberries, and trailed her long, brown eyes in a sudden little smile about the circle, "I was generous. Since yesterday I have thought of nothing but Colin, I own it candidly. Is he not a handsome youth, monsieur?"

"H'm," replied Kilbreth grudgingly.
"So so!" While the prince, in smiling alarm, lifted his sparkling glass of pale vellow Moselle.

"You cannot expect us, mademoiselle, to share your enthusiasms in that regard. No—confusion to Colin, say I, and a murrain on his sheep!" To this very spiteful toast, he quaffed off his wine determinedly.

Miss Lonley pushed away her glass from her. "No, monsieur, I do not drink that toast. For my part, I think you unfair—you do not begrudge Mr. Kilbreth his Colinette, why should you deny me the joy of the small idyl which chance has granted to me?" For the moment there was the faintest hint of a sigh in her soft, calmly modulated tones, and her long lashes drooped upon her cheek. "After all," she added, "this world is very much with us! Why should not I, as well as another, long to live for a little while in Arcady?"

"Very true," cried Kilbreth heartily, "and here's to Arcady! And I promise you that Colinette and I will come to call upon Colin and you; and, perhaps, if the price of butter is up, and the wool market is firm, we will even ask

you to dinner!"

"It's all very well," cried Mrs. Lonley with a sudden volte-face, as though bound to encourage no further than a certain point the romantic fancies of her daughter, "but I'd like to see you trying love in a cottage, my dear child! We'd soon hear you talking as you did yesterday when you refused to go driving with me—you'd say that nature showed a lack of subtlety in the repetition, of her motifs, and that the fact that the view of the mountains belonged to everybody, free of expense, took away the exclusiveness of their charm!"

"Bravo!" cried the prince; "varium

et mutabile--'

"Yes, I suppose I did say it," admitted Miss Lonley, with a slight elevation of her dark eyebrows; "and probably I shall say worse things tomorrow; and feel them, too. All the more reason, I think, for letting me be sweetly sentimental to-day! For love in a cottage—I admit, on second thoughts, it would not suit me very well; unless the cottage were on the model of the Trianon, and I could go to Doucet's for my little bergère frocks every day or two, and have an art-nouveau crook monogrammed in emeralds!"

As a final expression of her person-

ality, these later expressions seemed more convincingly sincere than the fantastic softening of her mood a few moments before. Why was it, Kilbreth asked himself, that her words, though delicately phrased and softly uttered, failed so completely to touch and to charm? Why was it that her beauty, so unflawed in line and color, had no more power to move the beholder than its own image in duplicate. carved cunningly in coral and ivory and gold? For both from eyes and voice there was something missing; as in the case of the snow mountain to which he had likened her, there were no suggested depths, no perspective, no vague and appealing mystery. tragedy which had done so much to mold her life had, so far as he could see, done nothing to quicken the inner depths of her nature, or to soften the self-satisfied glitter of her large eyes. Leaving her loveliness behind, as cold, obvious, and undesirable, Kilbreth's fancy flew back to his glimmering vision of yesterday; to that white shape half-hidden in the green mystery of the laurel branches-"singing in the wilderness.'

"But then," said Kilbreth to himself, "what fault need I find with that? Each is suited to her métier—Colinette to Arcady and Love-in-Idleness; Miss Lonley to a marriage of convenience and the coronet of the Princesse des Ursins!" With a sigh of contentment at the reasonableness with which things were marching, he applied himself to the marring of his Mont-Blanc-aux-

confitures.

"And now," remarked Mrs. Lonley, rising, "I think it would be more amusing to go over to the Casino for our coffee and liqueurs, don't you?"

D

11

SI

"We can play the little horses!" cried the duquesa; "and listen to the music, and make fun of the way our friends' frocks fit in the back. Yes, decidedly the Casino will be the more amusing."

V.

As, in the brilliant dawdling streets of Luchon a carriage is considered at

the best an incubus, the company walked together down the wide avenue of poplars to the gateway of the villa, and along the Allée des Bains to the evening rendezvous of all the town.

Either by accident or maneuver, Kilbreth found himself at the side of his hostess; and over the heads of the stout duque, and the tiny fluttering comtesse who walked in front, Kilbreth's companion flung an enraptured maternal eye at the two tall blond figures which walked together in steady

rhythm before them.

"Mr. Kilbreth, isn't it lovely?" Mrs. Lonley's voice, held down to a discreet whisper, broke, and ran in quivering tones of ecstatic satisfaction. "They are made for each other, there's no doubt of that! Revelstone was nothing to him-absolutely nothing. I've been planning it all the evening; the entertainment I'm going to give in New York next spring, if all goes as it should - something on the French style, with a dinner, a play, and a dance, all in costume . . . that would be the most striking and the most appropriate, I think !- to present my son-in-law and my daughter, the Prince and Princesse des Ursins. Ah, I can just see New York crawling up for invitations! Have you said anything to the prince yet, Mr. Kilbreth, or he to you?"

"Not yet, Mrs. Lonley," retorted Kilbreth; "but, really, I don't think that we need have any doubt!"

They turned into the Casino grounds, where, beneath the laburnum and almond-trees, set with tiny electric lights like golden and rosy fruit, a gay company was promenading. The delicate air was filled with a subtle harmony, blended of chattering tongues, of the murmuring Pique, and of the orchestra which, upon the veranda of the Casino, played the gay airs of the latest success of the Opéra Comique.

"It is strange, is it not!" cried Miss Lonley. "We travel twenty hours from Paris, and then the best that we can do is to make for ourselves a second Paris in the wilderness!"

"And a very convenient place, too,"

retorted the dequesa, "for us poor Spaniards, thus to bring Paris to our own frontier. Ah, the little horses, look at them—or the little automobiles that they have now instead! Are they delicious, I ask you? So let us be quick, I entreat you, with this tiresome coffee and this stupid cherry-brandy!"

At one of the little tables with which the wide veranda was covered. Mrs. Lonley seated herself with her guests; and to the seductive strains of Louise, in the company of all that was gayest and most ephemeral in the Old World. they sipped their coffee and their liqueurs, and challenged the toilets and the private morals of those who sat around them. Like a modern Bath, like a small and intimate Monte Carlo, this little glittering world of Luchon presented the members of every aristocracy in Europe to each other's shrewd inspection. Nor was it to be doubted, from the glances and the knowing murmurs with which their entrance was greeted, that the tongues of the surrounding company were less busy about them than theirs about the company.

In his conversation of the day before with the prince, Kilbreth had exhausted his superlatives in describing Miss Lonley's blond beauty. Even in that blasé and experienced crowd, the ripple caused by her entrance was distinct and obvious. At every table gold eyeglasses were put up, questions asked and answered: those who were privileged to bow, saluted this center of attraction with alacrity and empressement. As for Miss Lonley herself, she held up her golden head with as calm an indifference as though she were entering a Sunday-school; meanwhile the prince, upon whom, in turn, the lorgnettes and whispered comments were leveled, showed an exterior as calm and as unmoved as that of the young lady at his side.

"Look at them!" whispered Mrs. Lonley to Kilbreth, under cover of a burst of music from the violins and a ripple of laughter created by a dignified bon mot of the stout grandee from Madrid. "Look at them!" she whis-

pered. "Everybody on this terrace is staring at my Bettina and at the prince—for, you see, since his arrival, everybody in Luchon has been dying to get hold of him. And now . . . do they suspect anything, I wonder? Of course they must! Oh, Mr. Kilbreth, I

am so happy!"

Indeed, it seemed that she had just grounds for satisfaction, for the evening, which had begun so brilliantly, continued without a break toward a glittering and triumphant conclusion. When the liqueurs were finished, they moved on to the ivory-white, oval ballroom of the Casino, where among a crowd more or less mixed, but very smiling and extremely well dressed, they spun and glided to the gay measures of a waltz or two. In a moment, Mrs. Lonley and her daughter were surrounded by a group of their ac-Mademoiselle, however, quaintances. declared that she was engaged, that she meant to dance very little, and so forth; and after her dance with the prince, and another in which Evan had the happiness of guiding her stately steps, the whole crowd were dragged away by the duquesa to the hall of the green tables and the whirling toy automobiles.

Here the company was even more curiously compounded than in the ball-room; of stout and stately noblemen with their lawful ladies, and little redsashed flaneurs, with ladies whose coppery locks reflected no law of nature or otherwise. Here the croupiers, hovering like vultures, uttered their raucous cries, and raked in the gold which fell in glittering showers, as if from Jupiter himself, upon the green and greedy squares of the wide tables.

Kilbreth, as became a poor young man of no present and no prospects, put down a couple of five-franc pieces; and when they were swept away into the gaping treasure-box of the bank, he stood by, an amused spectator, to watch the play of the company around him. The duquesa was winning largely; there was a red spot in each olive cheek, and her hand trembled as she pocketed the heap of louis which

at the end of every game the croupier swept to her. Miss Lonley, however, seemed doomed to bad luck; the gold which she scattered haphazard upon one number after another, seemed possessed of an inveterate disposition to fly away. Still she played on, calm, smiling, and unruffled. How many hundred francs had she lost, Kilbreth asked himself; and, as the evening wore away, how many thousands? She took the notes from a small jeweled bag upon her arm, exchanged them for gold, and played on. Kilbreth, a stranger for some months to the sight of plutocratic expenditure, gasped in a kind of wonder to see the careless ease with which money ran through these beautiful hands.

Well, luckily it was none of his affair. There was, thank Heaven, plenty for her and for Lucien, too! "The game is made!" cried the mechanical tones of the croupier, as he spun the wheel of the gilded automobiles. Miss Lonley stood listening to the murmured conversation of the prince beside her. Tall and superb in the floating, creamy laces of her cloak, she seemed a part of the glittering, artificial, perfumed world about her—its final type and ultimate expression; its

perfect flowering.

The game was made; she glanced at the table. "I have lost again," she observed, with a smile, as she threw down another thousand-franc note to be changed into gold."

"Never mind, Bettina chèrie!" cried the little comtesse. "Unlucky at games, you know, then all the good fortune of

the world in love!"

In unruffled composure, Miss Lonley returned her bantering smile. Then the eye of the little Parisian, wandering in search of sympathetic merriment, caught the stray glance of Kilbreth. With the merest flicker of her delicate eyebrow, she indicated the pair beside her—tall, fair, and perfectly mated. In triumphant understanding, Kilbreth followed her glance; and, as he turned back to the comtesse again, he permitted himself the luxury of a grin.

Beneath the shadows of the drooping willows and the blackness of the turpentine-trees, the two friends walked up the valley together toward Castelvielh. Behind the dark-edged rampart of the eastern mountains a midnight moon was dawning. Her unseen presence filled the sky with a misty white glow, and brought the faroff Pic du Midi starting from the darkness, in thin and luminous outline. Here and there among the clustering foliage gleamed the flittering sparks of the fireflies; and from the gorge below the high-terraced road, the foaming Pique reflected the pallid radiance of the sky. All around them in the windless night were the clear tinkle of falling water, the cataracts of the tiny river, the bursting of the mountain streams, the noise of the swift brooks which run perpetually by every curbstone in the town.

The prince turned his large eyes toward his friend, who, smiling secretly in the darkness, strode demurely at his side. "Aha, my old rascal?" he said affectionately, and then: "Sacred blue, my brave, do you think, then, that I have not divined it, your intention in taking me with you to the Villa des

Quinconces to-night?"

Evan laughed outright, "If I thought you had not divined it," he returned, "I should have a very poor

opinion of your intelligence!"

The prince was silent a moment as they walked on together, shoulder to shoulder, up the dusty hill. "She is charming, your Mademoiselle Bettina," he said suddenly; "her beauty is perfect, as are likewise her manner and her intelligence. . . . Evan! you know that we sometimes find it difficult, we other Frenchmen, to distinguish when you Americans are in jest and when you are in earnest. So tell me—do you mean what you say?"

Though Kilbreth had not yet, as a matter of fact, said anything at all, he intuitively guessed the meaning of Des Ursins, as Des Ursins had guessed his own. So he answered with a smile:

"I will own, Lucien, that I have regarded the affair as a mere idle pleasantry, without a moment's thought of serious results either as affecting the young lady or yourself. But I will also own, the suitability of the affair is undeniable; and I assure you I am now ready to be as much in earnest as

ever you like!"

The prince drew a long breath. "Ah!" he said. "I know they seem strange to you other Americans, these marriages of convenience which are so much the fashion of our poor France. Though usually," he added with a smile, "the intermediary who arranges the match is some old lady with a wig and a vast emptiness of time at her disposal-however, since you have begun the business with such skill, we will leave it in your hands. So-now remember, my friend, this means, for me, a very serious business! And answer me-do you think that the young lady's parents would be inclined to regard me with favor?"

Kilbreth burst into a shout of laughter. "With favor?" he cried—"with favor?" Then, with a sudden recollection, he checked himself to the requisite degree of decorum. "My dear Lucien," he said, "certain things that Mrs. Lonley has said have given me the idea that she finds you a very proper and desirable young person indeed. And I really think that if you chose to present yourself, that the

chances are-"

"Ah!" answered Lucien slowly "Then if you think that they would be disposed to regard my title as prince and my position in the French army as a fair equivalent for what they have to offer, then. I ask you—what of the young lady herself? I know well, you see, the independence of your American young girls! And do you think that Mademoiselle Bettina would be inclined to look with favor upon this project of marriage with me?"

"The question of a young lady's inclination," returned Evan, "is one which neither you, nor I, nor all the gods can answer! But for various good reasons—your own very great at-

tractions, my dear Lucien," he added, bowing politely, "being not the least-I should say the odds are very much in favor of the young lady being of her

mother's frame of mind.'

Des Ursins gave the point a moment's reflection as they walked slowly together up the darkened hill road. "Then one last question," he said, "and I hope, Evan, that you will not think me impertinent, or lacking in respect, if I ask you in all discretion: what of the family, what of the young lady herself, as the future Princesse des Ursins?"

"As I told you yesterday," returned the American, "Bettina Lonley was mixed up in a rather disagreeable affair last year, that made it more convenient for her to leave New York. But as I told you also, and will youch for besides, there was no breath of any kind against her character; merely a reputation for an extreme cold-bloodedness-which, after all, is not a disadvantageous attribute in a wife, in an arranged alliance, when you come to think of it! But, you see, after a calamitous affair like that, it becomes extremely desirable that when she returns to London and New York, it should be as the heroine of a very glittering marriage! So fate, as you see, my friend, plays directly into your hand."

"Yes." Lucien's assent, though ready, was lacking in enthusiasm, and Kilbreth burst out laughing in the

darkness.

"Good heavens, my boy, what do you want? She is beautiful, she is above reproach, she has money-money enough, I tell you, to buy all Gascony! Her mother's first husband owned half the copper-mines in Michigan. I have heard Mrs. Lonley's fortune estimated at anything from fifteen to twenty-five millions. Bettina is her only child, and you, of all Europe, are the son-in-law best calculated to please her."

Des Ursins turned with a sudden cordial sincerity in his tones. "Evan, you are a good friend; and have no doubt, I appreciate what you are doing for me! I own, the young lady's beauty has enchanted me. Already, it seems to me, I find in my heart some love with which to offer my hand to mademoiselle!" He paused for an instant's reflection. "But she is beautiful, is she not?-blond as the wheat ears, white like the petals of the camel-And, moreover-what do you suppose, my friend, that she told mewhat do you think she found cast up at the river's edge, in her instant's wandering before she came to dinner?"

He turned, laughing, to his friend, who shook his head slowly in the darkness. "I am sure, Lucien, I have no

idea!"

"The charm that vesterday you set floating in the river for me!" cried the prince, in triumph. "The little heart that you carved of wood, and threw into the Pique to find my Undine for me. Fate cast it up, my friend, at the feet of Mademoiselle Bettina. Obviously, destiny has designed us for each other. And I will do my best, should I win her, to make her happy. Unless"-the speaker turned with a sudden new idea in his tone-"unless, my friend, you happen to be in love with her yourself."

Kilbreth laughed lazily. "I, in love with Bettina Lonley! Good Lord, no! Besides—you know, it was your heart that she picked up!"

Lucien hesitated, with a little laugh. "Eh bien, my friend, to tell you the truth, I don't know, for certain. She refused, you see, to let me take it in my hand and look at it. But my sense of dramatic fitness, or, perhaps, my fatuity, told me that it must be mine.'

"Certainly," cried Kilbreth, "it was not mine. Beauties like Miss Bettina, you see, are not for poor devils like me. Besides, my affections are previously engaged. My heart belongs to Colinette. And my business in life, at present, is to see you married to Miss

Lonley.'

"My dear friend," cried the prince affectionately, "you load me with your benefits, and for yourself you do nothing. If I could but see you rich and happy now-if I could but see you rec-

onciled to madame your aunt in America, and once more heir to her millions!"

Kilbreth shook his head. "I'd look well, shouldn't I," he retorted dryly, "coming back to my Aunt Ariana, and saving: 'Dear auntie, I haven't made much of a success, after all, of the career I was so certain and so haughty about. In fact, I am extremely hard So please take me back, and leave me your money!' Though the poor old lady-the fact is, I should rather like to see her again. Mrs. Lonley says she is looking very changed. If it weren't for the money, perhaps . . . but no, I can't go sneaking back like a beggar. No. don't worry about me, my dear Lucien, I

shall do very well."

Lucien shook his head with a sigh. "Very well, you know your own business best, though I own I am sometimes tempted—— However, it is none of my affair. So to return to our muttons, tell me, what procedure do you advise? You have taken upon yourself the office of intermediary (and a droll of an intermediary you are, my faith!) so will you have the kindness to speak to madame, and see if she is inclined to look with favor upon my suit? If she answers yes, then I will make my court. Let me see-there are twenty-seven days still left of my permission. If all goes favorably, then the last week of August I make my formal demand for the hand of mademoiselle."

"That's right!" cried Kilbreth, in high approval, "yes, since you authorize me, it will give me all the joy in life to present your compliments to madame in the morning, and obtain her formal consent to your suit. And by the new year, she will have attained the goal of her ambitions, she will be mother to a princesse. And you, my dear Lucien, you will swim in

gold!"

"I shall never swim so far or so fast, my old man," returned the prince, "as to forget the kind friend who brought me to the river of gold." And turning with the dramatic gesture of the Latin he held out his hand to the companion at his side. "This," he said slowly, as he clasped Kilbreth's hand in his own, "is the ratification of our friendship; I commit myself into your hands, I trust you entirely. And the gratitude for my future happiness, I give it all to you."

In a few moments they had ascended the hill of Castelvielh to the dark and shadowy château on its crest; and La Flèche, rubbing his eyes and yawning, had dropped the great, jangling bolt, and admitted them into the silent emptiness of the ancient high-walled court-

· VII.

Beneath the acacias of the Parc des Ouinconces, before the great white marble baths, all Luchon sat chattering, and drinking its morning dose of the waters, and listening to the music. Here and there among the crowd trundled little hand carriages, pushed ubiquitous red-waistcoated guides, conveying patients to or from their morning baths. The donkeys with children on their backs, the brightkerchiefed peasant women that trotted behind them, the little open-air shops, with their gay woolens and glittering Spanish jewelry-even the pallid diplomats and the languid court-ladies in the park, all reflected something of the keen brightness of the mountain morning.

Mrs. Lonley, seated in a wicker chair with her Pomeranian at her feet,

radiated satisfaction.

"My dear Mr. Kilbreth," she was saying, "I am delighted with him, positively delighted, the most charming young man !- and such a title, and that dear old château, and the Hôtel des Ursins in the Faubourg-St.-Germain, that we positively must buy back, if it's in the market. We'll have the religious ceremony at the Madeleine, with singers from the Opéra, everything as chic as possible. Then we'll all go back to New York for a short visit, just for a few weeks after Eas-There are a lot of people there, you see, that I want the princesse to

cut. Yes, it will be delicious . . . you say, Mr. Kilbreth, he authorized

you to speak for him?"

Kilbreth nodded. "That's the French way, you see, to make sure you won't be refused, before you commit yourself. I may bring him back word from you, then, of your permission to pay his addresses to mademoiselle?"

"May you!" cried Mrs. Lonley, in an accent of frank admission more un-

mistakable than her words.

"And—and Colonel Lonley?" pursued the intermediary, desirous of settling everything in the most approved

fashion for his friend.

"Colonel Lonley, pshaw!" cried the lady, with a toss of her head and flutter of her pink-ruffled parasol. "What does it matter what the colonel thinks?" Then, in sudden recollection, she added: "That is, it is agreed between us that the arrangement of Bettina's future belong to me. You understand, don't you, I speak for us both?"

In a momentary pang of pity for the absent colonel, Kilbreth smiled at her words. Then, "and mademoiselle?" he asked, with a slight hesitation in his

tone.

Mrs. Lonley wagged her head. "My dear man," she said, "Bettina, as I observed to you the other day, is no longer a child. She sees, as well as I, the necessity of retrieving lost ground; and she likes, quite as well as I do, the idea of her being a princesse, and dashing back to New York for an occasional visit to patronize everybody. Besides, I hinted to her last night what we are planning—and she hinted back, she liked the notion very much."

"So I may give your message to Monsieur des Ursins," said Kilbreth, rising, "that his suit is acceptable to monsieur, madame, and mademoiselle, and his visits welcome at the Villa des

Ouinconces?"

She touched his arm with a fat hand, squeezed in its long white glove. "You may," she returned, with sincerity, and then: "Mr. Kilbreth," she cried, with a laugh, "upon my word, you manage

the affair so beautifully, you ought to go into the business. Do! I know heaps of mothers, right in New York, who would be tickled to death to patronize you."

"Kilbreth's matrimonial agency," the young man tried the words with a judicious tilting of his head. "Yes, I think I will put up my sign on the Avenue of the Opéra and on Broadway. Princely alliances a specialty!"

"Well, I know that I can never be grateful enough to you," gushed Mrs. Lonley, with the ring of profound sincerity in her voice. "I give myself into your hands, I trust you to arrange everything. And if ever I can do anything for you—"

Her voice sunk to a whisper, she surveyed him with a tentative eye. "Good morning, Mrs. Lonley," said Kilbreth briskly. "I have some tramping to do, you see, before the second

breakfast.'

"Tell me," she said, "do you ever

do anything in copper?"

Kilbreth stared. "I? Good Lord! what should I know about copper?"

She smiled up into his face, a fat, guileless smile under her pink parasol. "Because," she answered, with elaborate carelessness, "my late husband left me such very large controlling interests in Amalgamated—Manitou and Georges, you know, and several others—and when anything is going to be doing, I am pretty sure to be informed by cable. I keep touch on all my affairs, you see, and often, when my friends allow me, I am so glad to put in a trifle for them."

Kilbreth laughed. This was, indeed, business with a vengeance. But though he had no desire for her money, he had still less desire to be offended at what was so evidently meant in kindness. "Your friends are lucky," he returned airily, "when they have a trifle to put in. But for my part, you see, those little games are a lux-

ury quite beyond me.'

"Then you must let me put in a little for you," she insisted. "Do! I have such a splendid tip from my managers only to-day. Just as a mere joke, as a mere formality, you must allow me-and if the market goes against you, of course you can pay me. But if it rises, as it's bound to do. . . It's quite regular, Mr. Kilbreth, and you must let me, indeed vou must."

Kilbreth laughed again. "It's really good of you," he said, "but I can't go into business that way, you know . . . Where is Miss Bettina this morning?"

Mrs. Lonley took the hint. "She's gone off shopping at those little booths up and down the avenue," she answered, "looking for pink pearls. And the colonel has gone for his douche at the baths over there, and you're going to leave me, and I shall bore myself to death all alone. Ah! there's the duquesa over there-I'll join her. We'll see you and the prince at tea this afternoon, in the Casino, sha'n't we? Au revoir, and a thousand thanks!"

VIII.

From the terrace and graveled path that zigzagged up the mountainside to the Well of Love, Kilbreth stepped out into the green tangle of the hillside. After his energetic and unstinted attention to his friend's affairs, he had now, he very justly told himself, earned a little holiday. And if he was returning to the pastures of Colinette, it was not with any cheap romantic ideas of a rural flirtation-no, though the girl was doubtless very pretty, what interest could that fact possibly possess for him? But her voice was remarkably sweet and true, and her little fragment of song about the nightingale, if he could but complete and verify it. would prove a valuable addition to his meditated article for the Revue des Deux Mondes on "Chansonettes of Gasconv.'

Nevertheless, as this disinterested student ascended the hillside, and came in sight of the ruined stone cross, showing above the willows and hollybushes, he was conscious of a curious quickening of his heart, not commonly associated with the pure philological interest. Would she be there?-he asked himself. If so, would she be as charming as her voice, and as pretty as Miss Lonley had said? Would it be too foolish, too far beneath his dignity, for him to speak to her-and if he spoke, would she answer him? Then -"Pshaw!" he cried. "You romantic, moonstruck idiot, will you never grow up? That little peasant girl's duty is to mind her sheep; and yours, at present, is to take a fine, healthy scramble up the side of this mountain."

Even when he stood just beside the laurel-hedge that bordered the pasture and the sheep-fold, he forced himself to stand still for a moment, to look out over the world below his feetat the valley, paved with gray roofs and waving green tree-tops, at the rocky wall of dark Pyrenees which faced him; while at the far end of the valley, like a wandering cloud caught in sudden rigidity of outline, a frozen, deathlike shape in a world of living green and blue, rose the glittering snows of the Pic du Midi.

These natural beauties, however, seemed to him at the moment extraordinarily detached and lifeless. "She's not there," he said to himself, as he listened carefully for her voice or the cropping of her sheep. "It's a perfectly absurd business, anyway, for a man of my age. And as my path goes straight across this pasture, why shouldn't I take it? Yes, in any case I must make the top of this mountain

to-day."

So, beating the thorned holly and the laurel back with his barbed stick, he pushed boldly on into the pasture of the sheep-fold. And behind the palegreen willows that bordered the tinkling unseen brook, he saw a flutter of white.

It was now many years since Kilbreth had first told himself that he was very experienced, very knowing. completely past the age of youthful foolishness; but never in his boyhood itself had he known more completely perhaps that blended pang of joy and mystery which we call romance, than now as he stole through the sweetsmelling green shadows for a nearer glimpse of her to whom almost unconsciously he had for the past forty-eight hours dedicated all his secret thoughts. Gently he raised his hand to push aside the pale, hanging tangle of the branches; and before him, by the brookside, with a white lace parasol over her head, a book in her lap, and a large box of candy at her side, he beheld Miss Lonley.

IX.

She glanced up with a gesture of slow and unsurprised curiosity, to face the newcomer emerging from the willow branches. "Why, if it isn't Mr. Kilbreth!" she said lazily, and then: "Good morning, Mr. Kilbreth. Excuse my not rising, but I am so comfortable. You've come to look for Colinette. I suppose?"

Somewhat dazed, and, to speak the truth, disappointed at the result of this sudden encounter, Kilbreth returned her salutation. "How do you do, Miss Lonley!" he responded. "Have you seen your friend Colin this morning?"

She shook her head. "He's nowhere to be seen, or Colinette, either," she answered. "Really, we're very out of luck this morning, Mr. Kilbreth! Are you going straight on up the mountain, or will you stay and take an instant's refreshment here by the brook?"

She smiled up into his face, with a sudden engaging frankness as new and as unexpected as was her appearance. With a newly kindled interest, Kilbreth regarded her. Certainly, the nook beneath the cool, gray willows, with the green turf and the clear mountain brook, looked very attractive indeed to the wayfarer up rocky slopes and steep, sun-baked pastures. With an exclamation of contentment, he sank to a seat upon the grass. "With your permission, Miss Lonley, I'll sit down for a few moments," he said, "but please don't let me interrupt your reading, or put you out in any way."

"Ah!" she cried gratefully. "Now, that's downright good of you, Mr. Kilbreth. To tell you the truth, I am

dying to finish my book—a real dime novel, straight from New York—so exciting! If you don't mind, I would just like to find out whether she marries him in the end. Have some candy while you wait, won't you? And

now, just one moment."

As Kilbreth helped himself from the large pink box of marrons-glacés, which was offered for his delectation, he stole discreet glances at the absorbed figure beside him. Was she really the same person as last night's stately drawing-room beauty, this freshfaced young girl in her little white frock, with the golden tendrils of hair which the warm wind blew softly over her cheek? By some mysterious alchemy, her cold, worldly polish had been dissolved into the summer day about her, till she seemed as completely the incarnated spirit of laurel-trees and springing water, as last night in pearls and spangles she had seemed the perfected type of the glittering, overcivilized throng at the Casino. Less striking she was to-day, perhaps, less regularly beautiful; but to her appearance there was added a certain appealing quality, a new and winning charm that perplexed Kilbreth as he regarded

Suddenly she tossed her book aside, and glanced up at him. Her brown eyes were full of laughter, and he noticed in a kind of detached wonder how dark were her lashes and brows against the fairness of her skin.

"I suppose," she said frankly, "that you think I'm an awful idiot. Do

you?"

He was taken aback not so much by the question as by the gentleness, the air of deference for his opinion of her, with which it was spoken. "No, Miss Lonley," he returned, with an air of careful consideration, "I don't know that I think you are an idiot, strictly speaking. Why should I, please?"

"Oh, it's all very well," she cried, helping herself to a marron, "to laugh at me when you find me hiding up here on the hillside with my dime novel and my candy. When I was littler, I used to hide under the piano.

But now that I'm a young lady-oh, how tired I get sometimes of the business of being a young lady!" she added, in a sudden outburst of feeling. "Now, don't you think that you would, too, in my place, Mr. Kilbreth?" "Not," he returned, with a bow, "if

. I succeeded in the business as admira-

bly as does Miss Lonley!"

"Ah!"-she shook her head, and the light wind lifted her shining hair. "No, don't give me compliments here, please; because you see they are not in harmony with the place, or with what I come to find here. Down there"-she waved her hand toward the pale mists of the valley-"I have to be thinking all the time of what is expected of me, I can show only the thin outside layer of myself, so to speak-the professional beauty (don't think me conceited, please—it's a very tiresome métier, I assure you!) the jeune fille à marier-anything but myself. But when I hide under the piano, or among the laurels on the mountainside, then I'm Bettina! She plays wild, reckless pranks, she talks about herself till she'd make you cry, she stuffs with candy that's forbidden her in the valley, on account of her complexion. Mr. Kilbreth, you are warned! And if you don't want to be shocked and bored to death, you had better go on up the mountain."

She turned toward him a flushed and kindled face, laughing under the white laces of her parasol. In the intimacy of the moment, in the confidential sweetness of her manner, Evan found a sudden extraordinary charm. "I think it's a very nice game of yours, Miss Lonley," he said seriously, "this of being Bettina. Go right on; please

don't mind me."

She shook her bright head. "Ah," she said, "but you don't know the things I do sometimes, when I have had to pay calls all the afternoon, or stand and be fitted for new frocks-or when I've had to be polite and entertaining to a tableful of people that mama says will be useful to us. (Poor mama!) Truly, I am not ungrateful, but I grow desperate. That's the reason, you see, that I had to come up here on the mountain to-day-" She stopped abruptly as she caught the quizzical expression of Kilbreth's eve regarding her. "No," she cried suddenly, "I won't take that back. I told you you would hear horrid things if you stayed. And, besides," she added, with a charming smile that showed unexpected dimples in the soft pinkness of her cheeks, "remember it was not with you that I talked last night."

"Now," said Kilbreth, breaking rules against paying compli-

ments?

"If the truth happens to be agreeable," she returned, "that is no reason for keeping it back, is it? Besides, what I said was undeniable. I did not, Mr. Kilbreth, exchange more than two words with you last night. Though your friend, Monsieur des Ursins, is a very charming person, isn't he?"

Her words brought Kilbreth back to a sudden realization of certain matters that for the moment he had forgotten. In a keen and fleeting glance, he searched the lovely face before him for some sign of understanding or of selfconsciousness. But the soft brown eves were wide open and unreserved as those of a spaniel's. Evidently her astute mother had as yet told her noth-

"Yes," he replied, with emphasis, "Lucien is one of the most charming fellows, and one of the finest fellows, that I know. So unpretentious, so clever, so hard-working-there's no chap, French or American, that I like and respect more than I do Lucien des Ursins, and I assure you, Miss

Lonley-"Ah," she interrupted him playfully, "I should think you were recommending him for a situation—'prince, noble, but honest, speaks three languages,

willing to travel-Kilbreth flushed furiously. His touch had been too heavy, he had spoiled matters, he had given the whole affair away. What business had he, after all, in meddling with such delicate affairs? His troubled feelings were suddenly smoothed and healed by

the soft laughter of Miss Lonley's

"There, Mr. Kilbreth, I didn't mean to be rude; it's just my horrid little natural self, that I told you was on top this morning. Indeed, I found the prince perfectly delightful, and, I think, quite the handsomest man I ever saw—when a Frenchman is blond.

he does it so beautifully."

With mingled feelings, Kilbreth raised his head. Yes, she admired Lucien, that was a step in the right direction—but why, he asked himself, did that assurance give him so little pleasure? Was it mere masculine jealousy, at hearing approval of another man on the lips of a beautiful woman-or did his schemes for the disposal of her future, very clever and very suitable while she was still hardly more than a remembered abstraction, become suddenly, in her living presence, rather presumptuous and slightly sordid? He was curiously oppressed, vaguely troubled.

Miss Lonley's voice broke in on his meditations. "Have a marron, Mr. Kilbreth! And now—we've had Prince des Ursins conversation, and Bettina conversation—I think now we might have a little Kilbreth conversation. You see, I know a thing or two about you; you're a very distinguished man. You have won prizes and things at

Paris, haven't you?"

Kilbreth sighed. In spite of the lightness of her tone, the subject on which she had touched was not one on which he could be any less than serious. "Ah, Miss Lonley, my great hopes of making a name for myself in Europe, I'm afraid they haven't turned out quite so dashingly as they began! My third year in Paris I won the Maxim prize from the Academy-and then I had a fever, and some friends of mine from New York came along with their yacht and carried me off to Japan. Then when I got back to Paris there were so many other things to do! Not that I haven't worked-yes, off and on, but not as I meant to. My forthcoming work on 'Some Aspects of the Troubadours' is a long while maturing. No, while I'm not a success, I'm not even a good, honest failure. And now, how do you like the Kilbreth

conversation, Miss Lonley?"

"It's respectable conversation," she cried quickly. "You have the courage, as they say in the modern plays, to be yourself and to live your life in your own way. While I," she sighed, "dare to be myself only by fits and starts, under the piano or on the top of a mountain. For, you see -- " She leaned toward him with a little, confiding air which made him remember, wondering, his last night's idea that she resembled in any way the cold, white peak which he could even now descry through the willow-trees. "You see, she said slowly, "I am nothing but a coward myself. I talk very finely about being tired of this life that I lead, of money and admiration, when I know perfectly well that if I had to lose them all, I should simply die. For I know, you see," she added candidly, "what it is to be poor. Before papa married mama—I call her that, you see, for she is so entirely a mother to me-when papa and I lived alone together in the old house in Washington Square, we were poor, quite poor. I was only a little girl, but I can still remember how I hated cold meat and made-over dresses and traveling in the common car. No, I complain about the life I lead now, and call it monotonous and artificial and so forth-but, oh, deep down in my heart I love it. While you, Mr. Kilbreth," she added quickly, "you have the courage to leave your home, and turn your back on the great fortune that was lying ready for you-all to carry out your own ideals of life, and develop what you knew was finest in you. Oh, I hope you will hurry up with your work on the troubadours. I've read your other things, you know, and I think they are splendid."

To hear his own praises, the praises of his cherished work, on lips whose soft brilliance he was that instant admiring—this is a sensation calculated to break down the most rigid indifference with which a man can be provided;

and Kilbreth, in spite of his loyalty to Colinette, was far from being indifferent to the beautiful presence beside him. "Flattery!" he cried, dissembling his delight. "Remember, Miss Lonley,

the rules of the game!"

"The game," she insisted "is to tell the truth, and so, I tell you, it's years now since I first heard about you. At dinner one night at your aunt's, the man next to me told me all about you, and I thought I would rather meet you than any one else in the world. For, you see, it was money, money all about me-and to hear of somebody that had found something in life that was worth more than money, and was willing to throw the money all away . . . yes, I don't mind telling you, it struck me very much. I never forgot it. And then, some years later, I met you in London-at supper at the Trocadero one night, do you remember?"

In spite of himself, his mind flew back at her words to the shadow which hung over her past, to the tragedy to which the evening in question had been but a precursor. Was it possible, after all, that what they said of her was true; that she had no heart, this sweet-voiced, winning apparition before him? Then a sudden little flicker of pain, showing through the brightness of her glance, disarmed his suspicion and his judgment. No, in the case of such beauty as hers, the ordinary rules of conduct made for plain, ordinary people did not apply.

"I remember that supper-party very well," he hastened to answer her. "I sat next to you, and we talked about strawberries and love at first sight."

She shot her brown eyes at him, and, in spite of his calm self-control, there was something in the glance which thrilled him curiously, in a manner for which his experience held no precedent. "I remember, too," she said softly, and nibbled her marron.

Kilbreth stared. Was she merely trying to keep her hand in, or did she really remember? Looking up, she caught his eye, fixed unbelievingly

upon her.

"Ah!" she cried, in vexation. "I see what you are thinking. You forget you are merely paying the penalty for coming upon me in one of my hours of being my own poor self. If you don't like me when I am myself, then surely escape is always open to you."

"But I am flattered, delighted," he hastened to reassure her, as he helped himself from the box she offered, "and in proof, I beg you—please, please go

on being yourself."

She sat up, suddenly very straight under her white parasol. "I might," she said, "I might go on till sunset—oh, there are heaps more things to tell you, I assure you. I might tell you what I found in the river last night. I might tell you the true story of that affair with Colin the other day, that I mentioned at table last evening. Suppose I did, now!"

For some curious reason, more insistent than logical, this affair of the token found in the Pique, last night so profoundly uninteresting, had suddenly become of a living, an immense significance. "Tell me," he said quickly, "you found a little carved heart of wood, didn't you? Show it to me."

She arched her evebrows at him. "How did you know?" she cried, in surprise; then with a sudden thought: "Ah, the prince told you, of course. What gossips men are, to be sure! Very well; you'll have no more to tell him than he had to tell you. It was a love-token from my friend Colin. wear it around my neck on a gold chain-see!" And she touched the airy folds of embroidered muslin which hid her beautiful bosom, and the halfseen shimmer of a slender golden thread, "And nobody," she finished, "shall ever see it again but just Colin himself."

Hardly realizing his own sensations, which through this rather amazing interview became constantly more and more bewildering, Kilbreth shrugged his shoulders, with a sigh. The heart that she wore above her own was, of course, that which he himself had set afloat to find Łucien's fate for him. Of course it was Lucien's—by all the rules

of the game, the field belonged to his And yet . . . with his eves filled with the grace before him. he sighed again. Then in sudden impatience at his own weakness:

"Tell me," he said, "what of this story about Colin, that you hint at so darkly? That's not a secret, I am

sure!"

"Ah, but it is!" she cried, while the laughter rippled over her face like the summer wind over a rose garden, "And on that account," she added, leaning toward him with her little, confidential air which he found so near to irresistible, "I have a great mind to tell you all about it. You will not tell anybody, even the prince-you will not be shocked, you promise me?"

"I promise," answered Kilbreth solemnly; "yes, I promise that I will never tell; and as to being shocked-"

She leaned toward him again, under the falling laces of her parasol, "Listen," she said, "I told the truth, but not the whole truth, you see, at table last night. For the other day, when I was here on the mountain and found your little shepherdess weeping. as I told you, for fear that Colin had taken the wrong path, and had passed her by . . . I told you all about that, you know."

"Yes," breathed Kilbreth, leaning toward her in a curious tensity of interest, though what was coming he could scarcely fathom; "yes, you stayed to speak to her; you found her as charming as I did."

"I did more than that," she cried, "for when I found out that what troubled her was, that she dared not leave her sheep to follow him-then I offered, you see, to take her place for a moment, and watch her little flock."

Kilbreth stared. "What!" he said. "You don't mean to tell me that

She interrupted him with the music of her laughter. "Now," she cried, "you are beginning to be shocked, and you know that is against the rules of the game. But I warn you, that is not the worst. For, you see, I had had a trying day. Callers all the morning, and being polite to people that I loathed, simply loathed. Then déjeuner at the duquesa's, and roulette after. which bores me to extinction. Then the milliner's, then a party at the Chaumière, with the little comtesse making remarks about America and redskins all the time. So at last when I managed to escape, I was desperate. I wasn't responsible. I suppose you will tell me it's very unsafe for me to come up the mountain alone-very well, that's why I do it. And the reason why, the other day, that I did something that's going to shock you dreadfully, when you hear about it.'

"I am listening, Miss Lonley," re-

marked Kilbreth patiently.

She hesitated a moment. "I don't know why I am telling you all this nonsense," she said, "but as I have begun, I must tell you the rest, I suppose. You see, when she had gone, I sat there singing the little song that I had heard her sing to her sheep to keep them from wandering—a pretty little song. Then, just to play the part as completely as I could, I took off my hat and folded my white chiffon veil as nearly like her coif as I could manage. Then I took up her distaff from the ground where she had thrown it. And then-

"And then, Miss Lonley?" In an excitement whose cause he himself hardly realized, Kilbreth leaned toward her, and his voice sounded curiously strained in his own ears as he repeated his question. "And then?"

She met his eyes, and her own were full of a girlish laughter. "And then, Mr. Kilbreth, somebody came! You see, they were evidently wandering in circles in the forest, like Helena and Demetrius, poor things! Colinette had run off to search for Colin, and Colin had come to the sheep-fold to find his Colinette. I heard him leap the wall. I heard the rustling of the willow branches. I ought to have turned and spoken, I ought to have run away-oh, yes, I know! But, you see, I was in one of my reckless moodsand it seemed too delicious to be sitting there among my sheep, waiting for Colin, a shepherdess in Arcady. So, don't be shocked! I sat quite still and kept on with my song—and then, Mr. Kilbreth, I heard his voice answering."

Kilbreth stared at her in silence, while his two days' dream, cherished in the secret places of his heart, readjusted itself with a bewildering confusion. "He answered your song?" he responded slowly.

She nodded. "Yes, just like Richard and Blondel, you see. They were pretty little words he sang, about the nightingale:

> "'S'il chante, qu'il chante, Il ne chante pas pour moi,'

and then"-she paused again, laugh-

"And then? Miss Lonley," affirmed Kilbreth, with an aggrieved air and a curiously troubled look in his eyes —"since the truth is the fashion, allow me to tell you, you have a very

aggravating way of telling a story!" 'Ah," she pleaded, "wait a moment —for, you see, I waited. I assure you, I realized how wildly, how imprudently I was acting. But, do you know," she added, with a sudden disarming earnestness, "it seemed to me, I had no choice in the matter. Whether it was the sense of adventure, or something in his voice that touched me . . I know, it seems absurd to say it of some wild little savage of these Gascon mountains-but there was something in his voice that touched me very strangely. I am not a sentimental person, you see-I have the reputation, as you probably know, of being as hard as nails. Whether his voice was very sweet or not I cannot tell you-but it seemed so real, so manly, so sincere. It seemed to sing straight to me, to the real Bettina that lies hidden somewhere far down, under all my scheming worldliness. And in that instant that I sat there waiting, it seemed to me that whoever stood behind me there in the laurels was the person that I had been waiting for all my life, and who had come to me at last."

She sat silent, her chin sunk upon her long, white hand. All about them the leaves and the stream blended their inarticulate harmony. Somewhere in the willow branches an unseen linnet uttered its melodious piping, and the breeze from the valley below came, burdened with the faint, far-off tolling of some slow-tongued bell. Until this moment, perhaps, Kilbreth had not known how completely his imagination had been possessed by that half-seen vision, that sweet-singing voice of his unknown charmer—nor how far, perhaps, quite unconsciously to himself, he had this morning been won upon by the cordial simplicity and the beauty of Miss Lonley herself. The two impressions, uniting vaguely in his mind, filled him with the sense of an exquisite mystery, of a new delight poignant almost to pain. He tried to control his voice to tones of gay unconcern as he broke in upon her rev-

"And then," he asked tentatively, "you answered him?"

She turned startled eyes upon him. "How did you know?" she cried, with quick suspicion; then, laughing to herself: "Of course," she said, "it was not very hard to guess. Yes, I sang back the next two lines, as well as I knew them:

"'Il chante pour ma mie, Qui est près de moi!'

Yes, he was near me. I could hear his breath come and go as he stood among the branches behind me. But I wasn't frightened—no, not one scrap. And the event proved I was in the right of it."

"And then?" asked Kilbreth eagerly, like a child asking for the last chapter of a story which he already knows by heart.

She turned her large eyes on him. "He went away," she said. "Yes, I heard him turn, and his steps crackling over the twigs, and losing themselves in the grass. He saw, I suppose, that

over the twigs, and losing themselves in the grass. He saw, I suppose, that I was a fraud, trying to pass myself off as a real denizen of Arcady. Ah, Mr. Kilbreth," she broke off, with a

sigh, "I see quite well, Arcady is not for us. Your Colinette now-you will never see her again, and if you did, you would be disappointed in her-

isn't that so?"

In a curious confusion of mingled sensation, Kilbreth smiled at her. "No," he said, "you are quite wrong, Miss Lonley. For, you see, I have seen my Colinette again, and as for being disappointed in her-I assure you, she is a thousand times lovelier than my most lovely hopes."

"Ah!" she was silent for a moment, then turned toward him with a laugh of very determined gaiety. charming," she said. "Then it is true what the prince told us, you are really in love! Come, I have given you my confidence, you must give me yours in return. Are you really in love with

Colinette, Mr. Kilbreth?'

For a moment he sat silent. His senses were filled with the sweetness of her voice, the brightness of her smiling eyes, the fragrance of her pres-The pink dimple in her cheek came and went, as a little strand of golden hair fluttered across it; she put up her hand to push it back, and her glance met his-a glance that filled him with vague delight, and a strange. numb, helpless longing. The ideal which in all his wandering, beautyseeking life he had held up before him as a steadfast goal-and the glimmer of white and gold, the half-heard melody, which, as the prince had said, formed all that men need know of womanhood for his own undoing-all this he saw in the slender, delicately colored shape before him, smiling at him from under the white parasol. And in a kind of dispassionate wonder at himself, he remembered the pledges which he had given, first in jest and later in such bitter, amazing earnest, to Lucien and to Mrs. Lonley.

He took in his breath, and spoke very slowly and carefully. "Yes, said, "you are right, I am afraid. Yes. I believe I cannot doubt it, I am really in love with her, Miss Lonley!"

"Ah," she returned, "how very delightful. I am sure I wish you all the good luck in the world. Come, the sun is very high; I am sure it must be time for the second breakfast. Will you have the goodness, I wonder, to escort me to the funiculaire?"

X.

Déieuner at the château, served by the useful La Flèche, was eaten and done with, and Kilbreth, alone in the garden, watched the flying prismatic spray of the waterfall, and smoked a solitary cigarette. The more he meditated the more hopeless did the situation become-turn and twist as he might, he could find no escape from the net which (from the mere thread of an idle pleasantry) he had woven, like the Lady of Shalott, for his own

entangling.

Every five minutes, or, perhaps, every three minutes, he pulled out his watch and regarded the time; for at five o'clock he and Lucien, were to meet the Lonleys at the Casino for tea. The time, he found, went with amazing slowness. Even though, as he very fully realized, five o'clock would bring him not to Bettina of the mountainside, but to Miss Lonley of the Villa Ouinconces—a professional beauty of international reputation, the heiress of a prodigious number of millions, and, moreover, in all human calculation, the affianced wife of his friend. Lucien des Ursins.

"If I had known." he said to himself, in accents of victous self-reproach—
"if I had only known!" Then, with a pang of returning sanity, he laughed at his own presumptuous fatuity. Even if he had known that he was to be drawn into the fatal circle of those beautiful brown eyes, in whose shining so many other poor moths had already scorched and lost themselves-even so, what, then? Even if there were no princely suitor in the affair, what likelihood was there that a poor wandering student and penniless exile might dare to hope that he should ever wear upon his breast such a star as Bettina Lon-

One thing was certain, he must re-

turn no more to those dangerous paths on the Mountain of the Well of Love. Colinette must remain for him, what, indeed, she had been from the beginning—an exquisite memory, a fleeting vision of beauty which, by all laws of practical life, could never be realized for him. No, the doors of Arcady had closed on him; and by all dictates of honor and prudence he must remain stoically outside forever.

No, he must never climb that mountain again. Even though——

Yes, it was undoubtedly awkward. For that chansonette about the nightingale, of so peculiar an interest and so undoubted an authenticity—he must verify it, and complete it, if possible, for his, article on Troubadour-Survivals of which he had spoken to Miss Lonley. Those simple peasants of the Mountain of the Well of Love—he must see them again, question them, take down their song at first hand from their lips. As a conscientious student of early romance literature, he could not sacrifice such an opportunity.

As for Bettina, she would never be there again. Of all unlikely things, nothing was more unlikely than that! But, then, in case that the improbable came to pass, and she should return—

Then how imprudent, how reckless, for her to wander "seulette" (as the pastorals would put it) in those lonely Pyrenean forests! Tales came back to him of the brigands who are said still to haunt these rugged hills of the Spanish frontier. Of her careless indifference to danger, her own story of Colin had certainly given him sufficient warrant. Surely, it would not be the part of a gentleman thus to abandon her to her own mad devices. No, just once he must return, to watch over her from a distance, perhaps to warn her.

In all events, he was bound by his agreement with Lucien, in letter and in spirit. That being settled, how foolish for him to fear any danger!

"Come, my brave!" cried the prince's voice behind him, "it is half-past four, time to set out for the Casino."

Kilbreth jumped to his feet. "I am

ready," he answered quickly, though it seemed to him that his effort to make his voice quite natural had resulted in a curiously strained and self-conscious tone. "I am coming; let me get my hat," he added, as he moved toward the stairs.

Des Ursins detained him. "Wait a moment, my friend. Did you—did you speak to Mrs. Lonley, this morning, as you said?"

Kilbreth nodded, meeting his friend's eyes with a sudden resolute frankness. "I told her," he replied, with laborious exactness, "of your wish to make your court to mademoiselle her daughter. And she sent you back, from her part and that of monsieur the colonel, all the amiable things in the world, and her assurance of the pleasure which your visits will give at the Villa des Ouinconces!"

With an affectionate gesture, the prince smote his friend's shoulder as they walked up the dark stone staircase together. "Old match-maker!" he said, with a certain thread of seriousness in his laughter. "For all your friendship I give you my thanks—and some day, perhaps, those of Madame the Princesse des Ursins."

"I hope so," returned Kilbreth, with an earnestness which he tried to make sincere; "I hope so, indeed."

They had reached the height of the stairway, and between the gray, mossgrown statues which guarded its topmost step, the master of the château paused for one instant to regard the green garden beneath, with its bright hollyhocks and convolvulus, its leaping cascades and misty, overhanging rainbow.

"It is good-by to you now, little first love," said Lucien, with a laugh that was half a sigh, "good-by, Undine!"

XI.

The brief season in which this remote mountain valley wakes to a reflection of the outer world's glittering life, drew slowly to its close. By all odds, it was agreed on every hand, this present August had been the most

brilliant that had ever been seen in Luchon; and it was likewise agreed by those whose opinions were of value, that to the success of the summer no one had contributed more, or, perhaps, as much, as the open-handed châtelaine of Villa des Ouinconces and her beautiful daughter. Balls at the Casino, dinners at the celebrated (and fabulously expensive) Arnative's, automobile picnics, concerts with artists specially imported from Paris and from Madrid-no sooner had Mrs. Lonley concluded one round of entertainments than she began on a dozen more. And the duchesses, the marquises, and the minor royalties whom she was delighted to honor, were graciously pleased to eat her dinners and to dance to the music which she provided.

Hence, it was plain to every one that her summer's campaign at Luchon had been a vast success; especially as, according to common report and the plain evidence of every one's eyesight, the Prince des Ursins was about to lay his ancient coronet and his extremely desirable name at the feet of

mademoiselle.

"For it is all very well," observed the little Comtesse de Longvilliers to her friend the Duquesa da Ximenes, one afternoon in late August, as they were both enjoying the hospitality of their American friend at the gay little restaurant of Arnative's—"it's all very well, my faith! to admit the fact of this sacred republic of ours, but what would you? A title is a title! And though this little redskin is herself a citizen of the forest republic of the West, still, she seems ready to trade her millions for the coronet of a princesse."

"And why not?" demanded the duquesa; "your republics, my friend, come and go, like your millions. But a good title, like a good pair of shoes, lasts forever. And to be Princesse des Ursins—even to us other Spaniards, that is already something." And, with a sigh of contentment (for her own title went back to Ferdinand the Catholic) she turned toward the little openair stage with its troubadour singers.

and industriously absorbed the sorbet of Kümmel which was her idea of af-

The hostess, with her handsome husband beside her, smiled upon her guests. Colonel Lonley, in a glistening Panama hat and fresh, white spats, sipped his brandy-and-soda and displayed the innocuous regularity of his profile to the admiring sidewalk. As for his wife-with a marquis to hold her parasol and a prince as her pros-pective son-in-law bending in gallant attention to her daughter's conversation-Mrs. Lonley might be said to be on the pinnacle of worldly success and pious maternal joy. And from the marquis' conversation, her eye went back to her daughter, fair, sumptuous, with her white arms showing through the lace sleeves of her gown; and Lucien des Ursins beside her, his tall figure admirably set off by his black and scarlet uniform of the Cuirassiers. with his glistening sword and the stripes of silver lace upon his arm. He had been to an official breakfast at Toulouse that morning, and still wore his full-dress uniform.

"Bettina, darling," observed Mrs. Lonley, "move your head just the least bit in the world, so that I can see the singers. So picturesque, aren't they? There, thanks so much, chèrie! This is the kind of thing that we don't get in America, you see, monsieur, and for my part I feel that I mustn't miss a bit of it. I'm not like your friend Mr. Kilbreth, you see, prince. He is so superior and indifferent, he refuses to honor our little Luchon entertainments any more. Let me see, it's a whole week, isn't it, Bettina, since we

saw Mr. Kilbreth last?"

The young lady addressed bowed her head in languid acquiescence. She was looking particularly handsome this afternoon, a little paler, perhaps, than her wont, but very stately and composed under the assault of eyes and lorgnons which, as usual, made a target of her beauty from every table on the sidewalk.

"Ah, Evan!" observed the prince, with a smile. "He has grown tired of

our poor Luchon, you see, long ago. It is only by force, I assure you, that La Flèche and I have contrived to keep him with us these last few weeks. And even so, we never see anything of him, I assure you. Morning, noon, and night he is at his desk, or else wandering on the mountains, studying the peasants and their chansonettes."

"Just like Bettina," cried Mrs. Lonley fondly; "she has such a passion for long mountain walks, too, that I can hardly force her to put on civilized clothing, occasionally, and come to tea

with me."

"Then the paths of our two wanderers," returned the prince, "should by all mathematical laws occasionally cross each other. Tell me, mademoiselle, have you ever come across our misanthropic friend, in these rambles of yours?"

Miss Lonley sipped her tea, and laid down her cup with great precision, be-

fore she answered:

"You forget, monsieur, what you yourself told me, the first evening of our meeting. Mr. Kilbreth's time on the mountainside is fully occupied—his adorable Colinette, you know, of whom he is always talking."

The prince smiled. "Ah, yes, Coli-

nette----

His handsome face was, for the moment, overcast with a sudden perplexity. "I wonder, now——" he murmured beneath his breath; then, smiling again: "And you, mademoiselle, you see your

Colin, is it not so?"

She flushed faintly, a pale rose added suddenly to her white-and-golden coloring. "Ah, yes," she replied indifferently, "I have caught a glimpse of Colin, once or twice, I own. But I am afraid, if I am asked to speak the truth, that he does not impress one as being a devotee of Pears' Soap?"

"Ah, poor little désillusionée," cried the prince, shaking his head in sympathy. And then, as the singers on the platform began another roundelay, he leaned toward them in sudden interest. They were swarthy, gaily spangled creatures, a soprano and a barytone, whose voices blended together in a rude

seductive harmony. "Do you recognize it, mademoiselle, the air that they are singing?" asked the prince, with a suddenly quickened interest.

She tilted her chiffon sunshade, so that for the moment he saw nothing of her face but her erect little chin, with its dimple and its curving line of throat. "No, monsieur," she retorted,

with some abruptness.

"But, mademoiselle," insisted the prince, "have you so soon forgotten—the little song that you heard on the Mountain of the Well of Love one day last month—the same day, in fact, that I had the pleasure of meeting you? And my friend Evan—what a pity he could not come with me to-day! For he also, you remember, heard the same chansonette, and was so enchanted with it!"

"Oh, yes," retorted Miss Lonley, "I do remember, I believe, now that you speak of it. Some nonsense about hearing it sung by this shepherdess that he admires so much, I believe."

"That's it," cried Des Ursins, with a nod of acquiescence, "you see, he came upon her sitting in her pasture above the ancient sheep-fold, half-hidden by the laurel branches—all but a glimmer of her white dress and her golden hair, he said. She sang her little song, he sang the verse back again—and she, I believe, replied to his song, all in the true romantic style. But then, I regret to say, my friend Evan lost his courage, and ran away."

Upon the little green-twined stage, the guitars twanged and the voices rose in wild, sweet refrain:

> "Il chante pour ma mie, Qui est près de moi!"

Miss Lonley moved the intervening ruffles of her parasol. "Then you mean to tell me," she inquired, with a careless laugh, "that that is all that Mr. Kilbreth means when he talks of his beloved Colinette—the glimmer of her hair, and her voice answering his in that little song?"

"All, mademoiselle, I declare it to you!" retorted the prince, with a gesture of deprecating assurance, "but when you come to reflect upon the matter, was that not enough? For our friend Evan, for all his cold Anglo-Saxon blood and his misanthropic ways, is a true romanticist. And, moreover," added Lucien, drawing upon his imagination for the better defense of his friend, "her hair, he told me, shone like the nimbus of some saint, and her voice was like the voice of the sirens, which draws a man's heart from his body."

"Ah!" said Miss Lonley.

XII.

By the side of the clear-flowing rivulet of mountain water, Kilbreth sat throwing pebbles down the hillside, and pretending to himself that he was very

earnestly occupied indeed.

On his knee lay a note-book, from his hand a fountain pen oozed its slow, black stream upon the green turf. On the page before him were transcribed two or three fragmentary rimes, which he had taken down from the lips of an ancient wood-gatherer on the uplands, earlier in the day. Very prosaic the verses were, very ugly. They showed, however, a distinct Provençal influence. Yes, undoubtedly Kilbreth was very hard at work indeed.

"You idiot!" he said to himself, with a curious savagery of accent. "She's not coming, of course she's not coming!" And though it might have been supposed that these words, on the lips of so earnest a student, referred to the little peasant woman from whom, and from whom alone, he could learn the remaining verses of that highly interesting chanson about the nightingale on the bridge at Lourdes-still, curious to relate, it was not up toward the pasture that his eyes were so frequently turned, but down toward the path between the laurel-trees, which led up the hill from the Chaumière.

It was nearly a week, indeed, since his eyes, turned down that path, had been rewarded by the sight of an approaching figure. What a picture she had made, with the green leaves all about her, and the sunlight on her golden hair. He would not have believed that a year could be so long as this last week had been.

Perhaps, after all, it was merely churlishness on his part, so steadily to refuse to accompany Lucien to the Villa des Quinconces. Now, if he had gone yesterday to the five-o'clock at Arnative's, or if he had accepted Mrs. Lonley's invitation to breakfast to-day . . No, it was safer and more dignified, it was best for all concerned, that he should keep away. Their little encounters on the mountainside, where he came in pursuit of his legitimate work-they were so occasional, so purely accidental, that not even his own conscience ought to find any excuse for reproaching him. In word and in act, if not in the uncontrollable depths of his spirit, he had been true to his friend. For to warm himself now and then in the sunshine of her eyes, to listen to the delightful music of her laughter-what disloyalty or what resulting harm could there be in that, except, of course, for himself? And if there was a penalty for him to pay afterward-very well, some things were worth paying for.

After all, what difference did they make, these pledges and engagements with Lucien, of which in his own secret conscience he made so much? Even if he were not bound by every tie of honor to help on the match between his friend and the woman of his secret adoration, what better chance would he have of winning Bettina Lonley than he had of carrying off the prospective Princesse des Ursins?

"Come," he said to himself, as he viciously assaulted the unoffending brook with a shower of stray pebbles, "come, let us be practical! Now, suppose the way were clear for you to lay your precious self and your munificent two thousand dollars a year at her feet—what alternative should you be proposing to her? Is it your idea that she should share your life, and go back to turning her dresses, and riding in third-class carriages, and walking in the rain to save cab-fare—this young lady who goes out for an afternoon's

shopping, looking for pink pearls; and who thinks nothing of losing the amount of your whole year's income, in one single evening, at the table of the little automobiles? You would ask her to leave the life which, according to her own admission, she delights in —you would ask her, for your paltry sake, to go back to a way of living which she shudders even to remember? Oh, rare love! oh, sweet unselfishness!" Like a suddenly infuriate Narcissus, he shook his fist at the flickering image which the unoffending water

sent up to him.

"And now," he pursued, "let us look at the alternative; for me to enter her life, to live as a pensioner on her stepmother's millions! That's all very well for Lucien-he has a name and a glittering title to offer in exchange, as a fair business deal. Besides, it's the métier of a European noble, to live on his wife's money! 'Tis a custom hallowed by time, 'tis a necessity for keeping alive the beloved institution of an aristocracy. But for an American -no, for us it is too recently invented a profession to sit upon us gracefully: and so kept alive, we are no better than dead. There is Colonel Lonley, now -I see myself at sixty, moribund, genteel, with a stomach and a gold eveglass, a Colonel Lonley!" In sudden recollection, rather vividly illuminating, he remembered a certain conversation some weeks ago, which he had had with Mrs. Lonley in the Parc des Ouinconces. "Colonel Lonley, pshaw!" the lady had cried, in reply to a hinted remark of his own. "What on earth does it matter what the colonel thinks?"

And in a curiously vivid vision he beheld the beloved head of Bettina, a little sunken and florid, perhaps, and with whitened hair, tossed suddenly in the air with a gesture of contemptuous indifference. "Evan? Nonsense; what does it matter what Evan thinks?" Probably, indeed, she would not be guilty of the vulgarity of saying it; but she would think it, and nobody could blame her, he himself least of

He winced painfully. As a matter of fact, and in spite of his most earnest and conscientious efforts, he was very profoundly miserable. Never, in all his easy-going, man-of-the-world life had he wanted anything as he wanted now to be near Bettina—to watch the changing glory of her face, to listen to her voice, to breathe "that delicate air and flowery sigh of her."

"Bettina," he said to himself aloud, and his pulses quivered. Every fiber of him hungered for her presence. His human need of her was so sharp, so unreasonable, so overwhelming, that he had to clench his hands in the flower-spangled turf on which he sat, to keep himself from springing up and seeking her wherever she happened to be; and telling her outright of his love, claim-

ing her as his own.

Yes, if it were not for his pledges to Lucien, he had reached that point when he would willingly write in humble supplication to the haughty old aunt whose capricious affection had made his boyhood miserable; whose overbearing tyranny had driven him later from his home. However, perhaps luckily for his personal dignity, there was always Lucien! From the possible danger of finding himself another Colonel Lonley, a kind of masculine Danaë trying to preserve his dignity under the golden shower; from the possibility, more imminent, of seeing his begging letter returned unopened by the inflexible, suspicious old millionairess back there in New York -from these two painful dilemmas in which he might have found himself, he was always saved by the fact that he was, in the eyes of two persons very intimately concerned in the matter, the official intermediary in the forthcoming Lonley-Des Ursins marriage.

And, after all, as he told himself in a sudden sardenic awakening, he need not worry. He was doubly, triply safe in the fact of Miss Lonley's utter indifference toward himself. Because she had occasionally allowed him to interrupt her solitary ramble on the mountainside, because she had smiled at him with those beautiful brown eyes

of hers, was that any reason that he should beat his silly brain to pieces, with the bemoaning of adverse chances, with the calculation of ways

and means?

No, Bettina cared nothing for him; his reproaches of himself for disloyalty to Lucien were quite needless and thrown away. And thanks to his own astute management, she could have no guess of his weakness in her regard. She fancied his heart engaged with some impossibly bewitching young peasant girl-with the mythical Colinette of whom, in their brief talks together, he had often discoursed to her in carefully guarded, passionate periods. The game, which was so safe and which yet allowed him the delight of almost-not quite-opening his heart to her, had been inexpressibly delicious while it lasted.

Now, however, in the growing imperiousness of his own sensations, he recognized its danger. In two days, thank Heaven! Lucien's permission would come to an end. Then Kilbreth would carry out to the last particular the bargain which he had made with his friend; he would convey to Mrs. Lonley the prince's formal demand for

her daughter's hand.

Then, please Heaven, he could go away. And never, never, with his own good will, would he look again upon that consuming beauty.

Unless-unless, of course-

With an exclamation of disgust at his own weakness, he lit a cigarette and rose hastily to his feet.

XIII.

"I hope," said a sweet voice behind him, "that I am not driving you

away?"

He started, turned, made the best bow possible under the circumstances. Bettina, dressed in white, as always, was standing near him, smiling at him like Daphne from among the laurel branches.

"Indeed," he returned fervently, "you are my excuse for staying-if I

may be allowed to stay!"

She sank upon the fresh green turf beside the springing water, and fanned herself with the large flowered garden-hat which she carried in her hand. Her face was flushed, her hair clung in damp little rings against her forehead and the creamy softness of her neck; and in her brown eyes, as she turned them upon the unfortunate young man beside her, there lav a new softness: a dewy, melting sweetness-which was, after all, probably no more than the result of her momentary fatigue, but which set his heart beating in a strangely perplexed de-

"I have not seen you," she said

suddenly, "for a long time."
"No," he responded, averting his eves, and speaking with an abruptness which was his only resort from a for-bidden weakness, "I have been extremely busy, you see!"

"Ah," she returned, "of course, if you have no time to come and see your

friends-

There was silence between them: and again, as a moment before in his solitude, Evan clutched his hands in the grass and wild harebells among which he sat.

"Hark!" said Bettina suddenly, raising her white hand. Kilbreth turned

and listened.

"I should say," he answered in careful syllables, "that it was the pipes of that young goatherd-Colin we called him-that I met here on the mountain, the first day of my coming here to Luchon!"

"Ah," observed Miss Lonley, "then perhaps Colinette is with him. That will make you happy, won't it, Mr. Kilbreth?" And she glanced at him from under her long lashes, with a smile.

"H'm," returned Kilbreth; "I don't

know-"You don't know?" she cried in as-

tonishment.

"I don't know," he retorted, "why it should make me happy to see her with Colin! It seems to me, in fact, that the more I adore her, the more desperately uncomfortable, under the circumstances, the sight of her must make

"Ah," she said, "then you do love her, this Colinette of yours?"

He looked at her; and, in spite of himself, his glance rested like a caress on the long, white-clad lines of her supple figure, the glowing rose of her face, the lustrous, questioning bright-

ness of her eves.

"Isn't it ridiculous of me?" he said: "for you see, in all honor and equity, she belongs to somebody else. even if there weren't this Somebody Else in the case, it's dollars to francs that she would never look at me! For even in Arcady, I fancy, one must have something more substantial than love to offer to the lady of one's And even this latter quality, in which (and in which alone) I am so wealthy, is, as I take it, rather a hindrance than a help in the business. For the essential effect of love, as I find it, is to deprive you, in the beloved one's presence, of all the qualifications with which you might hope to win the love you want so badly! However"-with a vicious accuracy of aim he decapitated a marigold with one of the pebbles from the brookside-"however, I need not trouble myself. I have not the constitution, you see, of the grand criminal. Petty larceny, now and then, of a smile or a stray glance-that's all I have courage for! So now I'm making up my mind, you see, to run away from temptation altogether. That's the best plan, don't you think so?"

She smiled at him, a vague and enigmatical smile, as she played with the laces of her dress and an odd little ornament on a slender gold chain that hung round her neck. "I am thinking," she said softly, "of Colinette. She needs some one to think of her, poor girl. It seems to me that you don't waste many thoughts on her side of the question, Mr. Kilbreth!"

Kilbreth stared at her. Vanity or stupidity, which was the more unlikely medium with which to interpret her words? The long gold chain, twisting in her hands, swung toward him; and

for the moment surprise drove doubt and perplexity from his brain.

"Why, see," he exclaimed, "what you are wearing, Miss Lonley! One of the little hearts that I carved myself, and threw into the Pique-oh, such a long time ago! One for myself, and one for Lucien des Ursinswas it not amazing that you should find it?"

"Yes," she returned; "very ama-zing—"

"But I remember now," he went on slowly: "you told me, some time ago. of your finding a trifle of the sort." He smiled. "From Colin, I think you said?"

For a moment there was silence, while from behind the wall of dark holly and pale, overhanging willow came the patter of tiny hoofs on the soft grass, and the sudden plaintive bleating of a sheep. Bettina turned toward him, her tone a trifle unsteady.

"From Colin, yes," she said, and laughed. "Look, he has cut his initial

there himself!"

He examined the roughly carved pendant which she held out for his inspection; and in the sudden weighty significance which, at crucial moments, is often attached to the most childish trifles, the initial which he saw scratched upon this small object assumed the sudden monumental proportions of the finger of Fate, pointing out the way.

"That's not a C," he said, controlling his voice as well as he could, "though you shame the poor quality of my carving, Miss Lonley; that is an E, I happen to know-because the only duplicate in existence is marked with an L, and that is no L, that's certain. L, you see, stood for Lucien, and Ecan you guess, I wonder, what that

means?"

Her hand, with its delicate blue veins and pink, transparent nails, lay on the green turf, very close beside him—a pearl, he told himself, in a flight of desperate fancy, set about with virgin jade! What was the use of struggling any more?-this was the thought which whirled in his brain.

After all, if it had been intended that she should marry Lucien, would not the power which oversees such matters have arranged that it should be Lucien's token and not his own which should lie thus so close above her heart? He had done his best, but the responsibility was Fate's, not his.

"Do you know," he said again,

"what it stands for, that E?"

Again she laughed; and he fancied that there was nervousness in her laughter. "Not," she hesitated, "for—

for Kilbreth?"

"My Christian name," he hastened to assure her, "happens to be Evan. And in these pagan ceremonies, 'tis not the etiquette to use anything but the Christian name. The woodland gods, you see, take it as a subtle flattery! And in this case," he added, his head swimming, "they have certainly repaid me royally for my trifling deference to them!"

She was silent; and from his mind all sense of the obligations of his honor, of his worldly limitations, were swept by the intoxication of her nearness to him, the fragrance of her bodily presence. Of itself, his hand stretched itself out toward that white hand on the grass, so close beside

him-

Suddenly the willow branches parted on the slope above them, and two or three sheep stepped out upon the grassy hillside, closely followed by the plaintive melody of pipes, and the brighteyed, dingy figure of a young Gascon reasant. Beside him, with one brown arm flung about his neck, walked a girl; red-bodiced, red-lipped, her sunburnt hair decked with a wreath of the wild convolvulus. With the handle of her distaff, she guided the steps of her lagging sheep; and behind them. their heads dipping obediently to the charming of the pipes, walked a herd of the black goats, silken-haired and white-horned, which graze on these Pyrenean slopes.

Closely pressed against each other, their bright cheeks almost touching, the boy and girl walked with slow steps modulated to the thin, clear notes of the pipes. Faded by weather, stained by premature toil, they might undoubtedly be; but for this present moment, in the pathetically fleeting splendor of their youthful passion, they seemed the vision of an earlier world; the incarnation of Love itself in the form in which poets for two thousand years have loved best to sing it.

The little shepherdess, smiling in quick recognition at the beautiful figure of Miss Lonley, arrested her steps for an instant, as one by one her slow sheep leaped the brook. "Bon jour, m'sieu et dame!" she chanted, in the quaint accent of her mountain province. And her young companion, pausing in his piping to duck his faded scarlet cap, gave them the pretty hillside greeting of Gascony. "The blessing of the road be upon you, m'sieu et dame!"

The pipes resumed their monotonous melody, in the little querulous tune of the goatherd which one hears in almost unvarying strain through Latin lands; and which may be, perhaps, the same air to which the nymphs of Sicily danced on the greensward, and Theocritus sang the first of all the pastoral With the calm indifference of ditties. the barefooted, youth and maiden waded the shallow, tinkling brook, followed by the sharp, pattering hoofs of the obedient goats. In a moment, the thickgrowing trees had caught the little procession from the eyes of the two whom they left behind. Though still, from behind gray-leaved' willow and dark, bristling laurel-trees, there came back to them the plaintive, diminishing music of the pipes; and the girl's voice, raised suddenly in the familiar accents of her little song of the nightingale. Was it only his fancy, Kilbreth asked himself, that the words seemed touched with a new sadness, and the well-known, cheerful air subdued to a wistful minor key?

> "Car les roses sont finies, Et le romarin est mort—"

Her shrill, artless accents, half-lost in the notes of the piping and the thousand inarticulate noises of the living hillside, came drifting back to them like the voice of some echo singing

among the leaves.

"For the roses are vanished, and the dead ---" is breathed half to himself, as he turned back to the beautiful, motionless figure at his side. The magic of the moment was dimmed; the brightness of its temptation curiously rubbed away. Beside the free, idyllic perfection of the love which had just walked past them, his own passion seemed curiously warped and worldly, tarnished by the doubts and the sordid calculations which had pressed upon it from its And in the wide, dark eyes which Bettina turned upon him, he saw the same thought reflected almost to pain.

"They make one feel old," she breathed almost inaudibly; "they are so mercilessly, so flagrantly young!"

Kilbreth did not answer, but looked at her. She went on with a sudden smile: "But I did not notice, you see, that the girl had any recognition for you! Though she knew me, as you saw—"

Kilbreth stared. "Recognize me, that little peasant girl—why should she recognize me?" And the next moment, Bettina's quick laughter showed that she had caught him off his guard.

"But Colinette of the little flock, and the nightingale's song; Colinette, whose distaff I borrowed, and whom you have adored so faithfully—that was she, you know! And her brown eyes met his; and something in those eyes, laughing, merry, yet tender, too, showed him that she trod upon the outskirts of his secret. He met her eyes boldly, and the look in his own caused hers to droop.

"No," he said slowly, "that was not

my Colinette-"

For a moment they stood silent, looking out together over the motionless tree-tops below them. The afternoon sun, dropping behind the western range, threw the shadow of the mountain, on whose side they wandered, upon the lofty ramparts of rock which confronted them. While in the narrow ribbon of valley between, the rising vapors of the evening drew a thin

blue veil over the level meadows and the pointed black fingers of the cypresstrees. And far away above the valley, above the hills, up into the cold, blue spaces of the sky, the Pic du Midi lifted the gleaming frosts of its white, unchanging winter.

unchanging winter.

"Listen!" said Kilbreth softly; and from far beneath them, quivering through the stillness of the evening air, came the thin notes of the tolling angelus. Bettina, with a sudden wistful seriousness in her large eyes, lifted her white hand in the sign of the cross.

"I don't know," she said, in reply to the unspoken question in his eyes, "whether it can really do us any good or not. But, it seems to me, we need all the help we can get—poor little helpless, calculating creatures, bound to the wheel of the world! That girl who passed by just now—she is free to do as she pleases! I wonder how it feels—nothing to lose, everything to gain! While I—"

She paused suddenly. This new solemnity of her mood recalled Kilbreth to a quickened consciousness of those obligations which, only a few moments ago, he had so nearly forgotten. Yes, he was bound, hand and foot, by all the considerations which, in the inherited standards of his world, must be dearer to him even than his love. Bettina's voice, subdued to a kind of urgent and self-conscious calm, was in his ears.

"While I," she said slowly—"I have to think of a thousand other things before I can think of pleasing myself! I have a debt to pay—that's what I try to remember, all day long. You see, it isn't as though Mrs. Lonley were my real mother—"

She paused, and Kilbreth waited in silence. It seemed to him that he had divined her thought, even before her

lips had framed it.

"You see," she went on composedly, "papa had lost all his money; we were the poorest of the poor. Then the widow of the great copper king came along and married him—ah, it was like going into Heaven! She's been good to us; kind like an angel—dear

mama! And there's just one thing that she wants in exchange, that only I can give her." She paused and tried to laugh. "It seems absurd, does it not? But not half so absurd as it would be, if I did not do what she has set her heart on, and discharge my debt

honorably!"

Kilbreth opened his lips to speak. "No!" she cried; and put out her hand to command his silence. "I don't want anybody to argue with me on the subject, please. I've thought it all out very carefully, you see, and I have made up my mind. So last year I tried -I honestly tried, when poor Revelstone came along with his title and his ancestral places all over the United Kingdom: ves. I did my best to do as mama wished, and marry him. But when it came to the point, when he felt himself so sure of me"-she paused, with a little shudder, while Kilbreth surveyed her in grave sympathy-"you've heard about it, of course?" she questioned him suddenly.

He nodded silently. "Ah," she cried, "of course you have—who hasn't, in the whole English-speaking world, heard of Bettina Lonley, the murderess and vampire! Yet I was sorry for him; indeed I was! But when it came to the day, I couldn't marry him! He was horrible, poor boy—he and what he called his love for me. So I took back my word, and all that happened—happened—" She stopped short, and her face went white, Kilbreth looked at her, silent, distressed for the suffering which he saw in her

eyes.

"Poor mama!" she added with a sigh. "That was where it hit me the worst, you see! She had been so proud, so glad of the great match I was making—and then, to see all the fine prospects shattered, and nothing but notoriety and disgrace offered to her in exchange. After all she had done for papa and me—I felt it then; I feel it now, I assure you, as deeply as any one should! So I made up my mind, you see, that as soon as I could do so without sacrificing my own self-respect, I must make the great mar-

riage which she had set her heart upon, and which I owed to her—yes, which I owe to her in the merest common

honesty!"

In a curious subconscious thrill of his imagination, Kilbreth noticed that her fingers, as she spoke, were twined in a kind of clinging tenderness about the little rustic token which bore his initial, and which still hung on its gold chain about her soft white neck. But the dewy beauty of her eyes, as she raised them to his face, was calm, selfcontrolled, enigmatical as that of the sphinx. How much did it mean, the implied confession of her words? He gathered his breath to demand an explanation of her secret thoughts; to protest, to implore—then he found himself helplessly entangled in the bonds which held him. The obligations of his own word given and pledged, the beseeching tone in which Bettina had told him of the debt which weighed so heavily upon her own sensitive spirit -these were considerations which even in the face of the desperate yearning which clutched at his heart must remain unchallenged and inviolate. For by no stretch of the imagination, alas, could he flatter himself that his was the gallant and distinguished name required as the price of Bettina's sacrifice! And hideously alive and binding. there was his own promise to Lucien. When he spoke, it was with the curious instinct of fretting a desperate wound to its full capacity of pain.

"Lucien des Ursins," he said slowly—and his voice sounded far away and vague in his ears, like his own tones heard in a dream—"Lucien des Ursins is as fine a chap as lives on this earth, and his title goes back to old France—to ancient Florence; to Rome

itself if you like-"

She nodded; and he saw from the look in her deep eyes that she understood his meaning. "Yes," she answered calmly, "mama thinks very highly of Monsieur des Ursins, and so, you see—so do I!" Her face changed; her tone suddenly resumed its normal elegant formality. The fine-spun, airy bridge of unspoken meanings and with-

held, seeking glances, which had a moment ago almost united their two hesitating souls, had been swept away and dissolved by a sudden gust from the cold zones of every-day convention. "Of course," he said to himself, "she cares nothing for you, you poor dunderhead; and, things being as they are, you had best thank Heaven on your bended knees that she does not."

"By the way," she said airily, as she pinned her rose-wreathed hat over her golden hair, and gathered up her skirts and her parasol preparatory to departure. "We are to see you at the villa to-night, Monsieur des Ursins and you, aren't we? Your stay is so near its close now, we certainly hope for

the pleasure."

He bowed. Despair filled his soul, and a blind, unreasoning rebellion against the calm smiling of the eyes, the unruffled white and gold of her sumptuous, careless beauty; but his tone was sufficiently polite and untroubled as he replied:

"To-night? Ah, yes, the dance at the Casino. Thank you so much; we shall be at the villa about nine o'clock,

I suppose."

She gave him her hand—a cool, soft hand, perfectly steady and firm in the clasp of his fingers. "No, thanks," she cried in reply to his hesitating offer, "I think, for once, that I would best walk to the Chaumière alone—we don't want to start all the tongues of Luchon to wagging, you know!"

With a bow, in her best style as woman of the world, she stepped across the tiny brook and turned down the hillside; and the wall of drooping willow sprays folded her white figure in

their gray-green leaves.

Suddenly he started and listened—she was singing, all alone among the trees, as she had sung that first day that he had come upon her in this very spot—how long ago! Across the intervening barrier of green leaves and springing water, the tones of her rich contralto voice came back to him—vibrant, sweet, filled with an ineffable melancholy tenderness. The chansonette of the little shepherdess, though

illuminated with a new beauty by the haunting sweetness of her voice, was still the same, with the regretful yearning of its gentle passion, its tranquil acceptance of inexorable fate:

"For the roses are vanished, And the rosemary is dead---"

Evan, left alone by the brookside, stared down the mountain at the clustering willows and laurel-trees whence the voice, like some disembodied and vanishing spirit, came back to him. He had kept his word to his friend; he had respected the honorable scruples of the woman whom he loved. And never, since he was a boy, had he felt himself so lonely and so miserable.

XIV.

It was nearly two hours later that Kilbreth, ready dressed for the evening, came slowly into the large hexagonal hall of the château, where in the enclosure of a wide Moorish window, the table was laid for two. In spite of the trouble of his mind, or perhaps because of it, Evan was hungry for his dinner; and it was with a pang of distinct disappointment that he beheld upon the glistening, timeworn damask nothing but a silver tray of bread and a decanter of the crimson Burgundy.

La Flèche, in his shabby green livery which melted picturesquely into the faded gold of the walls, met the entrance of his master's guest with a respectful bow. "I have already informed monseigneur," he observed, with a curious sidelong glance of his deep-set old eyes, "that he is served, but he comes not yet. Will monsieur wait for the coming of monseigneur, or shall I serve him on the instant?"

"I will wait!" answered Kilbreth, as he glanced with a momentary interest at the old man. Even to his perplexed and distracted soul, there seemed something new in the ancient and decorous presence before him—a touch of lurking triumph in the sunken eyes, a flicker of furtive malice on the lips which addressed him so demurely.

"Monseigneur," observed La Flèche, "sits yet in the garden by the side of the waterfall, where he drank his tea. Doubtless, he will soon return. Meantime, here is the journal which but now came from Paris; here is monsieur's mail; here is his quincona. Monsieur desires nothing more?"

"Nothing more, thanks, La Flèche," responded Kilbreth, as he sank into a seat by the window and poured himself out a glass of the delicate appetizer which the old man placed before him. La Flèche was an admirable servant; quiet, alert, attentive, who, like one of the devoted retainers of history, filled the parts of a complete staff of servants in the prince's attenuated household. Now, as he polished the forks and arranged the hors d'œuvres dishes in a symmetrical curve, he watched the prince's guest with a veiled

but wary eye.

"They are all bills in this mail of mine, La Flèche," complained Kilbreth. "Here's a bill from my bootmaker which he thinks I must have overlooked—unhappily it makes little difference whether I overlook it, or whether I look it over! . . . Here is my account from that wicked little shop in the Rue de la Paix, which I never can resist. For the rest of my life, it makes no difference whether I wear neckties or not: so that is one item saved in my future expenditure. . . Here is an invitation to shoot in Scotland next week-some duke having fallen out at the last moment. her ladyship falls back upon ineligible me. Here is . . hello, I say, what's this!"

La Flèche, who seldom condescended to pay much serious attention to the trifling conversation of his master's impecunious guest, continued to arrange the wild harebell and fern sprays in the dish of antique silver which decorated the center of the table. Americans, for him, had one cause and justification for their existence; this was, their money. Monsieur the American before him (in spite of regular and somewhat extravagant tips) was therefore an existing fact

only as he ate three meals a day, and daily destroyed the polish of a pair of shoes. With hate and triumph, unexplained but unmistakable, in his faded eye, the ancient servant watched the unconscious gentleman before him, as he sipped his quincona and took up the last of his letters—a thin, foreign envelope with a barbarous stamp (La Flèche had examined the letter well, an hour before, and could make nothing of it), and addressed in a tremulous, angular, Anglo-Saxon hand.

The letter, however, seemed to prove of so intense an interest, that the reader, in stretching out his hand for his glass, knocked it over instead; and, while the red-brown contents ran slowly over the white damask, he took no more notice than if he had bestowed the beverage in its proper and natural place. La Flèche sprang forward to repair the damages, but something in the eyes which were raised to meet him held him suddenly in unwilling, respectful attention.

"La Flèche," said Kilbreth; and his

flexible and colorless.

"Yes, monsieur!" La Flèche sighed, and watched the dark stain meander over his beloved table-cloth, while the

tone, like his face, was singularly in-

mad American spoke again:

"La Flèche, tell me; did you ever tie your own hands behind your back? Like standing in your own light, or putting your own nose out of joint, it is not so complicated an operation as it sounds! And then did you ever find that some one had come along and put a cup of the Wine of Life somewhere just above your head-just where, if your hands had been free, you might possibly be able to reach it for yourself? So that you can look up at what you want so much, and watch the beautiful sparkle of it, and the rosy and golden lights about the brim, and tell yourself that you are not so very thirsty, and that probably the wine is sour, after all. . . . For your hands, you see, are tied, and you tied them yourself! Did you ever have that experience, La Flèche?"

La Flèche shook his head. As he

made it a point never to pay any serious attention to the words of anybody but his master, he was not in the least disconcerted. Something, however, not so much in the wild and whirling words themselves, as in the quick urgency of the tone in which they were spoken, and the thin whiteness of the lips which uttered them, forced if not his interest, at least his curiosity.

"Monsieur," he inquired, with his despairing eye fixed on his ruined napery. "Monsieur has had losses?"

Monsieur laughed excitedly. La Flèche had never heard him laugh in just that tone before. "What do you say, La Flèche?" he answered. "Can a man lose that which was never his to lose? Perhaps not! Yet I who sit here before you, am a man who has had losses."

La Flèche eyed him with faint superiority. In his experience, there were two possible losses under the visitation of which gentlemen were apt to turn white and talk wildly; and as a gentleman's gentleman, he mentioned first the minor and the more genteel.

"Monsieur," he inquired sympathetically, "has perhaps lost his honor!"

Kilbreth laughed again. lost my honor, La Flèche? Not yet, though I own that its life burns low. It is wracked in all its joints; it has lost the will to live. But I am not going to let it die, La Flèche! I am kneeling beside it with hypodermics, and beef tea-I am putting pillows under its head, and calling it pet names, and begging it not to go off and leave me all alone to my own shameful devices. For if it deserted me, La Flèche, I might perhaps take this knife which has just been presented to me"-he fluttered the thin foreign letter-"and cut the bonds, and stretch out my hands for that cup of which I spoke a moment ago. And who knows? Perhaps I could reach it. But no. I won't do it, I won't! No, La Flèche, please God I have not lost my honor at least, not yet!"

La Flèche shook his head and sighed. The trouts aux fines herbes were drying up in the oven; he could

smell them; and the salad was visibly wilting before his eyes, yet his master came not. Though he was not, perhaps, altogether unable to guess at the cause of monseigneur's tardiness—

"Then perhaps monsieur," he asked again, with a delicate sigh, "has lost his money?"

Kilbreth looked at him, then burst suddenly into a yell of laughter.

"Lost my money, La Flèche? Never till this moment have I had any to lose. But now I am rich, I tell you; hideously rich! Where is your master, La Flèche? I must speak to him instantly!"

"No, no, monsieur!" cried La Flèche, in a suddenly genuine tone of undissimulated alarm; "I will go for him myself, I will find monseigneur myself. I beg of monsieur..."

myself. I beg of monsieur—"
But Kilbreth, thrusting aside the withered brown hand which the old man put out to detain him, fairly ran from the hall.

XV.

The frothy whiteness of the Pique, racing over black stones below the garden, was tinged with the faint gray-green of the twilight which filtered through its overhanging willows. The vaporous spray of its cascade wetted the faces of the tall, pale hollyhocks; beneath them the lawn was green like a shadowy emerald, and all about them the dewy freshness of evening was in the air.

Lucien des Ursins, motionless on his gray stone bench beside the noisy rivulet, stirred not even to sigh, or to shiver under the encroaching chill of the mountain evening, or to observe the quick footstep which came hurrying down the long staircase from the château above.

"Lucien!" cried the voice of his friend behind him. "What is the matter—why don't you come in to your dinner, my friend? Come, I am hungry!"

The prince turned slowly; and at the curious, inexplicable change which had fallen over his face, all thought of his own concerns was swept for the instant from Kilbreth's mind.

"What is the matter, my dear friend?" he cried anxiously. "Tell me.

has anything happened?"

Des Ursins shook his head. "No," he said; "nothing has happened!" Then, putting out a suddenly deprecating hand—"Evan," he said, "I ask your pardon for my poor old La Flèche! Believe me——"

Kilbreth stared. "La Flèche? What has he done? He has done nothing!"

The prince shook his head again. "Ah, my friend, but listen! Yet you must forgive him—for, you see, it is generations now since the ancestors of this poor old man of mine have been attached to the house of Ursins. He would steal for me—betray his country, his best friend for me! So you see—"

Kilbreth spoke impatiently. "My dear Lucien, why not come to the point? I noticed something odd about him to-night—what has he done?"

"My dear Evan," sighed Lucien, "you will own it is rather hard to have to tell one's best friend, in one's own house, that one's own servant has

played the spy upon him!"

A curious little icy shock of doubt ran over Kilbreth's frame. There was only one thing, indeed, to which the speaker's words could refer; and by the conscious-smitten shame which he felt, he was aware for the first time of how far he had strayed from the strict obligations of his duty—he who had flattered himself that his honor was not yet dead! He moistened his lips with his tongue. "Well?" he said.

But the prince seemed as apologetic of mood as he himself. "You understand, Evan," he said anxiously. "He is so desirous, the poor old man, that I should make a wealthy marriage, and restore the house which he loves to something of its ancient glory! All his life, you may say, is bound up in that one desire. So now that he has seen Mademoiselle Lonley, and heard of her fortune, and heard, perhaps"—he hesitated—"perhaps something of our conversation; perhaps some idle chatter in the town... his soul is

bent upon this marriage. You understand?"

"I do," replied Kilbreth calmly; "but I see there no nefarious service, no dereliction of duty for his master's

sake."

"Ah, mon Dicu," cried Lucien, with a despairing wave of the hand, "you see, that is not all! For he hears tales in the village above here, this old wretch of mine, from the family of shepherds whose daughter pastures her flocks on the Mountain of the Well of Love. The old pighead, he is of a stupidity to cut with a knife! I have yet to settle scores with him—for he dares to watch you; he presumes to dog your footsteps. And this afternoon—"

The prince's voice broke off in an extremity of embarrassment. With returning self-control, his listener came

to his rescue.

"He saw me, I suppose, when I had come upon Miss Lonley, somewhere near the Chaumière there; and she condescended to stay for a few moments and discuss chansonettes with me?"

"That's it, that's it, my dear Evan!" cried the prince, in an extremity of distress. "He was there all the time behind the laurel-trees, the old wretch. And conceive of it, then! He fancied all the time that he was serving me!"

This open-hearted simplicity on the part of his friend, this absence of all suspicions, this generous candor, struck strangely upon Evan's consciousness. He had tried to do his best; he had but a few moments ago flattered himself on his own honorable self-control—but how far, alas, had he fallen short of the ideal imparted to him! But he could at least afford to look Lucien honestly in the eyes, as he asked slowly:

"And you, Lucien, you had no doubts; you did not care?"

To his amazement, the handsome, high-featured face before him dissolved into a suddenly bitter helplessness. "Do I care, Evan?" he cried, in a high, changed voice. "No, sacrebleu! I

Evan stared at him. Had he suddenly gone mad? A little icy air

care nothing-nothing at all!"

breathing down from the snowy peak at the valley's end blew suddenly cold upon them; and brought them, incidently, the faint bouquet of La Flèche's frying cutlets and sauce Milanaise. Kilbreth laid his hand persuasively upon his host's arm. "Come," he said, "we can finish our discussion over the table, can we not? For poor old La Flèche is biting his nails, you see, over his ruined dinner—and, remember, we are due at the Villa des Quinconces at nine o'clock!"

Lucien drew back quietly from his friend's hand. "I am sorry," he said quietly, "but I cannot go with you to the Villa des Quinconces!"

"What!" cried Kilbreth. "What!" Then groping among the thoughts which whirled in his brain: "But tomorrow," he said slowly, "is the next to the last day of your permission. Remember, to-night is the night that you make your formal demand of her parents, for the hand of Miss Bet-

The prince turned his face away in the shadows of the twilight. "I know all that, my friend," he said, "but I

cannot go."

Kilbreth stood silent; for one explanation only was possible of this sudden enigmatical attitude on the part of his friend, and to that explanation he hesitated to give utterance. "Lucien," he said slowly, forcing his words, "I understand, believe me, how you feel, though in your generous friendship you refuse to address any reproaches to me. Believe me, in spite of our accidental meetings on the hillside, there is nothing between Miss Lonley and me. In every way, I hope,

"My dear friend," the prince interrupted him impatiently, "do you take me for a fool? Do I not know you to be the soul of honor? Do I not remember, moreover, that the first evening after my presentation at the Villa des Quinconces, I asked you outright whether you were in love with mademoiselle? And you answered determinedly, finally, No!"

I have respected---'

"Then why not keep your engage-

ment for to-night," asked Kilbreth slowly, "if, as you say, you have no doubts, you do not care?"

Des Ursins sprang to his feet and threw out his hand in a sudden dramatic gesture of abandonment. "Can you not see, Evan," he cried, "that that is the very reason why I cannot go tonight? If I cared for Mademoiselle Bettina, as I should care for the lady whom I am to make my wife, I should be at this moment tortured with doubts, consumed with jealousy! Ah, ves, it is all very well for you to urge that I know you to be honor itself, that I have, moreover, your assurance that she possesses no interest for you! But, do you not see, I ought to be urging these reasons upon myself; I ought to be pouring them like an oil of healing upon my burning soul? But, as a matter of fact, I do not give them a thought! You are faithful to your. bond with me, yes-but that is nothing to me! You care nothing for herbut if these accidental meetings upon which my poor La Flèche has spied had been trysts of the most passionate love, it would be all the same thing to me. Do you not see, if I were at this moment the happy victim of the tender, the heavenly, passion, I would not believe a word of what you, my friend, said to me-my sword would be at your stomach, sacrebleu!" His hands fell with a gesture of despair, and he laughed helplessly. .

"It is the old story," he went on slowly; "this is not the first time, as I have told you, my friend, that I have tried to drive that sordid bargain which my world finds so natural-to exchange my ancient name and my title as prince for the bonds and the bankstock of some plutocratic heiress. . . Yes, she is beautiful, your Mademoiselle Bettina; but, in spite of what I told you the first night of our meeting, her beauty leaves me cold. I find her conversation agreeable. have every respect for her characterbelieve me, that old story of the suiciding milord, and the necessity of her finding a husband in France, has not a feather's weight with me. No, it is merely that, as on the other similar occasions of which I have spoken-that now I find myself upon the point of making the demand, I am haunted, as always, by the miserable question: Is it for my rank or for myself, for my beau nom or my beaux yeux, that this young girl is said to be willing to become my wife? And I myself-if it were not that she is heiress to uncounted millions of francs, should I think of offering her this poor hand of mine? No. I swear to you, my friend, it is a business which I find too sordid. too degrading!" He turned with sudden energy to the silent figure beside him in the shadow. "What do you think. Evan?" he asked eagerly. "Have I gone too far to retreat; is it still possible for me to draw back with honor?"

The American's face was turned away toward the white snow mountain which gleamed luminously through the gathering dusk, but his voice was very slow and careful as he answered:

"No, Lucien, you are not compromised; it is still very decidedly possible for you to retreat. And I, who took your first demand to Madame Lonley, I charge myself with carrying to her the announcement of your withdrawal!"

The prince grasped his hand. "You do not mind? 'Tis a disagreeable business," he hesitated, with conscience-

smitten scruples.

Kilbreth shook his head. "No, Lucien, I do not object in the least," he replied slowly, and smiled into the twi-

light.

"Behold what it is," Lucien cried ecstatically, "to have a friend like you!" Then, as his friend still stood silent, the prince turned back with a thin, drawn gesture, and a sudden hush in his voice. "Look, my Evan," he whispered, with a little smile, "look yonder in the waterfall!" And he pointed at the slender stream of whiteness which roared and whirled its way over the glistening black rocks below them. "There is her white arm beckoning to me from the foam; there are her dark eyes shining at me from the shallows . . . iust as they used to

long ago, in the starlit nights of my boyhood, when I stole away from my tutor and came down here by the waterside, to dream dreams that I cannot forget!" He sighed and kissed his hand to the flying stream with a fantastic yet wistful grace.

"Do not disquiet yourself, my little Undine," he said. "Until your lover meets you in the flesh, he swears that he will be faithful to you—to you alone, and to his dreams of you!"

"And now," cried Kilbreth, "let us

go in to dinner!"

Then as the two friends, with slow steps, walked up the darkening staircase of sunken stone together, the American addressed his host with a sudden careless voice which, in spite of him, ran and laughed with a secret,

unspoken joy.

"By the way," he said, "I forgot to tell you I owe you my thanks, old rascal! I have received this evening"—he spoke slowly—"a letter from my aunt in America. She hears from my friend, the Prince des Ursins, that I am come to a properly penitent frame of mind in her regard—and partly on that account; partly, I fancy, poor old dear! because I am the intimate friend of a prince, she extends to me her forgiveness, and reinstates me in my position as her favorite nephew and heir!"

"Ah!" cried Lucien, in a sudden outburst of relief, "then you have your rights again, and I am forgiven for my secret meddling in your affairs? Mon Dieu, but I am content to hear it! For, you see, last month when you were taking such prodigious pains to settle my poor life, and I knew of that immense fortune lying ready for you if some one would but write for it. . . . and I heard you, so often in jest, mention the address of Madame Vanrevel, on the Cinquième Avenue-it seemed a sin, my faith! that I should do nothing in return for all that you were trying to do for me! And so the wandering heir has come to his own again?"

Evan nodded, and his laugh was touched with an odd excitement. "See," he said—"see, here is her let-

ter!" And he unfolded from its envelope the thin, closely written sheet, with its pompously patronizing phrases and the irrepressible, affectionate longing of its tremulous postscript: "Come home, my own dear boy; come home!" And Kilbreth's thought, as his eye rested upon these words, was not all (to do him that justice) of the happiness which perhaps this sudden reversal of his fortunes had now made possible for him, "Poor old Aunt Ariana!" he said. "I own it's rather nice to think of seeing her again. I suppose, after all, I didn't do very well by her-"

The prince looked at him with a little inquiring smile. "So you are now a rich man? Congratulations, my

brave!" Kilbreth grasped the hand which the other held out to him. "It is you," he said, "that I have to thank for it! . . . Yes, I forget how many thousands there are lying to my credit at this moment at the Crédit Lyonnais in Paris . . . and how many blocks of bank-stock, and how many thirtystory office buildings there are coming to me some time in the future—though I'm in no hurry for that to happen, I'm sure! It seems too ridiculous, does it not? For I own I had not thought until this moment that a mere accession of material wealth could change the very essential breath of life for onethat and some other things-yes, some other things! . . . I ask myself, is it possible, after all?"

Des Ursins regarded his friend curiously as they walked together into the ancient hexagonal hall, with its faded gold walls gleaming in the light of the dinner candles, and its dark tapestries waving in the evening breeze that drew in through the open windows.

"Eat your dinner, my friend," he said kindly; "you are white like your cravat, my faith! The shock of this sudden happiness has been too much for you."

Kilbreth laughed excitedly as he threw himself upon the dinner which La Flèche, with furtive, mysterious looks, served the two gentlemen.

"I have not a moment to spare," he said. "I must hurry to the Villa des Quinconces, you see, to execute your commission with Madame Lonley. And whatever comes of that interview, I own that for this single moment I am happy—yes, I am happy!"

XVI.

As Kilbreth rose from the dinnertable, he met La Flèche, tray in hand, coming in through the open door from the outer hall. "A letter for you, monsieur," he said demurely, as he searched Kilbreth's face with his sunken side-glancing eyes.

With a careless hand, the American took the letter from the salver on which it was offered to him. As he recognized the handwriting of the address (a hand seen perhaps a half-dozen times before, in stray communications to his host, and now for the first time beheld in the characters of his own name), and as he realized from whom the letter had come, he was aware of a sudden shock of joy which amazed him in its poignant, terrible sweetness.

"Thanks, La Flèche," he said, in tones as near to indifference as he could mold them. Then as he held her letter in his hand, this projection of her dear presence, as it were, come to meet him on his way to her—as he breathed the faint, indistinguishable fragrance which it exhaled, the young man's delight broke suddenly out from the demure confines in which he strove to hold it.

"La Flèche," he cried, "did I tell you I am now what you call a millionaire? Droll, is it not? La Flèche, you have always done well by me—better, perhaps, than you knew or intended. Here's something for you, my brave!"

With hands that trembled in the excess of his eagerness, he pulled notes and gold together from his pocket; while the old man, with greedy, perplexed eyes, watched this sudden, bewildering reversal of the treatment which he had feared.

"Three hundred francs; four hundred francs, there you are; and some

odd gold and silver. There—I must keep a franc, you see, for my wire to Paris in the morning. There you are, La Flèche, and my most heartfelt

thanks!"

"A thousand thanks, monsieur!"
The supercilious eyes of the old servant were for once touched with a grudging, irrepressible respect as he clutched the white notes and the shining coin which the mad Anglo-Saxon held out to him. Had he known that monsieur, like all those other Americans, was a millionaire, then perhaps La Flèche would have—

The prince glanced up from the dark embrasure of the open window, where, with his cigar, he sat looking out over the shadowy garden and noisy half-seen river below. "Do not ruin yourself, my friend," he said; "keep something, I beg you, of your new millions!"

But Evan did not attend, for he was reading his letter. This is what he

read:

My Dear Mr. Kilbreth: I regret very much that a sudden headache will make it impossible for me to go to the dance at the Casino this evening. And as you are leaving Luchon so soon, perhaps we may as well consider our acquaintance as definitely closed.

You will find enclosed in this letter a trifling little object which, I fancy, belongs to you. Believe me, very sincerely yours,

BETTINA LONLEY.

Involuntarily, Kilbreth raised his hand to his cheek. It seemed to him that the mark of a slap must be printed there—the scarlet of a wanton, tingling blow.

With fingers curiously stiffened and helpless, he drew from the envelope the little heart, roughly carved of wood and marked with his initial, which he had last seen lying among the laces over Bettina's bosom-and in numb, bewildered pain, like that of an unjustly beaten dog, he surveyed the foolish little token above which he had so recently seen her beautiful eyes lifted to his in a dewy, ravishing smile. Had she found him too bold; was this her punishment for his single instant of presumption? Since that moment, he asked himself in a helpless amazement, what had happened to change her so completely: to make her turn on him with this bland, incomprehensible insult? He would go to her; he would demand the explanation which was his due. . . . Then, as his eye fell again upon the brief, cutting message in his hand, as he realized to what a desperate close this woman's careless injustice had brought the glittering happiness which this last hour had opened before him, his grieved bewilderment changed to a slow, proud indignation against her who had so wronged him. She had struck in the dark, causelessly, remorselessly, But, at least, she should never know how bitterly her blow had carried home!

"You are late," cried the prince anxiously; "remember, my friend, you are to take my message to Madame Lonley to-night. I am a brute, I know, to urge you—but you have not forgotten.

have you?"

Kilbreth shook his head as he took the hat and light Inverness which La Flèche, suddenly obsequious, held ready for him. "No," he said, "I will carry out my bargain, never fear, Lucien! In half an hour I shall be at the Villa des Quinconces. And to-morrow, as soon as I have my return wire from Paris, I leave Luchon!"

"And Colinette?" asked his friend.

with a smile.

With great care Kilbreth lit his cigarette at the match which the attentive La Flèche held out for him. "No," he returned thoughtfully, "not Colinette. Why? Because—I own the fact with great regret—Colinette has already left me. Yes, my friend, I have my congé—what we call in English the mitten. I own to a certain disappointment, because I rather think she might have pleased Aunt Ariana; and I'm downright certain that she would have suited me. However, that's over and done with. Au revoir, my brave!"

XV.

Beneath the gold-embroidered hangings and the gold-leaf of an elaborately framed salon picture, Mrs. Lonley sat in opulent content upon her gilded sofa, smiling at the young man before her.

"Now I know," she was saying, "what you have come to say. For if ever I saw Pop-goes-the-Question in a man's eye, it was in that dear prince's this afternoon. To tell you the truth, I think that was why Bettina wouldn't go to the dance to-nightand glad enough I was, as you can imagine, to let the duquesa and all those other people go off without us. Yes, everything is going charmingly, I am sure. And to show that I am not ungrateful, Mr. Kilbreth, for all that you have done, and the tact and energy that you have shown, I am delighted to be able to tell you copper has gone soaring!"

Kilbreth stared. "Copper?" he said, in bewilderment; and Mrs. Lonley, bustling over to the little Louis XV. desk in the corner, smiled at him over a fat and bediamoned shoulder.

"Yes," she responded, "Manitou and Georges, where my late husband had such large interests. As I told you one day last month, when we were sitting together in the park, they keep me always informed of their movements; and I often put something in to oblige my friends. Now, as you have shown yourself such a good friend to us, Mr. Kilbreth, I just took that liberty, as I told you, to put in a little trifle, ten thousand or so, for you! Of course, if the market had gone flat, it would have been your loss; but, on the contrary, it happened to rise-to rise ridiculously! Your profits, I learn by cable to-day, amount to a trifle over fifteen thousand."

With a firm, podgy hand she pulled her morocco-bound check-book from its pigeonhole, and wrote a check with the rapidity and ease of one well used to the operation. Then as she turned, fairly radiating self-satisfaction, she held out the pale-green slip of paper to the dazed and indignant young man before her.

"There!" she said, beaming at him. "With my congratulations, Mr. Kilbreth!"

Kilbreth stared at her. And above

his anger, above his sharp humiliation that she should dare to treat him thus as a hungry social parasite, an abject creature whose offices were to be bought and sold for flagrant open cash—above his mortification and his rage rose a sudden, unreasoning desire to laugh.

"No, thanks, Mrs. Lonley," he answered quietly; "no, thanks, really! You see, I am not in the habit of taking checks from my friends for the performance of small friendly services. And at the present moment, as it happens, I am by no means likely to find myself in want of money. sides-" he paused for an instant, in relief that the coarseness of her own methods had made unnecessary on his part any effort to soften the blow which he was obliged to deal her. "You see, Mrs. Lonley," he went on deliberately, "I am, unfortunately, not professional in the business. And in proof of the amateurish bungling of my performance, I regret to inform you that I am come to-night to pay you my parting respects, and to convey to you and to Miss Bettina the adieux and compliments of Monsieur des Ursins. He returns to his regiment the day after to-morrow; and to-morrow I go with him to Paris."

In a fierce rejection of the understanding which these words thrust upon her, Mrs. Lonley took in her breath. "But you bring some other message from the prince?" she cried quickly; "we're going to see him in Paris—he's going to write—"

Kilbreth shook his head. "To my deep regret, Mrs. Lonley, and to his own, his adieux are final. His sorrow, his apologies are profound; but he finds that, in spite of the charms of mademoiselle your daughter, his sentiments toward her are not of the depth and sincerity which would justify him in demanding her hand in marriage. Any explanation, any reparation he is willing to give; but he finds it more honorable thus to withdraw and to leave her free, than to inflict upon her the burden of a loveless, mercenary marriage!"

The jolly, florid tones of Mrs. Lonley's broad face changed gradually to a fixed and mottled purple. "Ah," she breathed in a curiously changed voice, "very pretty, upon my word. If the colonel had the spirit of a mouse, there'd be some reparation asked for, that this sensitive, high-minded young nobleman wouldn't fancy as well as talking these beautiful sentiments." She burst out laughing, and her voice took on the shrill and broken tones of anger. "Ah," she cried, "you are a pretty match-maker, aren't you? Do you flatter yourself, I wonder, that I don't understand?"

"What?" said Kilbreth, staring. "What?" With her angry indignation he was prepared to be patient, and even to sympathize, but the sudden innuendo of her words went past his intelligence. "I don't see," he replied helplessly, "what there is for you to understand, Mrs. Lonley, beyond the simple and regrettable truth which I have given to

you."

Again Mrs. Lonley laughed, and tossed her head with its elaborate braids and its ornaments of inlaid Spanish shell. "See here," she said, "do you suppose I don't understand what has happened, that the prince backs out this way at the last moment, and refuses to marry my poor girl? Ah! as though that miserable Revelstone business hadn't compromised her badly enough, you must come inafter you had promised to help us, too -and see what you could do to finish matters completely? You thought you were very safe, Mr. Kilbreth"-and her voice rose shriller still-"in your snug little meetings with the poor child, up there on the hillside! You didn't know that your little clandestine flirtation was being followed, and watched -and that the very afternoon before you came to me so smilingly with the news of its effects, the news of the cause itself would be brought to me!"

She paused for lack of breath, glaring at him. And in all the hurry and distress of Kilbreth's soul, his mind ran back to a furtively watching eye which he had left behind at Castel-

vielh, as well as to certain words which Lucien des Ursins had uttered a bare hour before. "La Flèche?" he asked

suddenly.

Mrs. Lonley nodded in fierce triumph. "He came to the colonel this very evening, a little while before dinner, the good old faithful soul!" she retorted. "He has a heart, you see, and some sense of honor; and he thought that Bettina's parents ought to know what was going on. So I taxed the child herself with it, immediately after dinner, and she admitted that it was true. Ah!" she cried, with a gesture of impotent rage and despair. "I knew there would be trouble come of it! I knew! Though I never suspected, you see, that the old man would go directly home and give his master the full history of the affair-nor did I suspect, I confess, that it would be Mr. Kilbreth, the author of all the mischief, who would have the audacity to come here to give me the news of it!"

Evan found his voice, and spoke with dignity. "I assure you, Mrs. Lonley," he said, "that my few chance encounters with Miss Bettina on the path above the Chaumière have had no weight, absolutely no weight, with my friend. Monsieur des Ursins—"

"Ah." interrupted Mrs. Lonley in accents of bitter scorn, "it's fine talking, isn't it, when the fat is in the fire and the mischief done? Who's to make it up, I ask you, to me and to my Bettina? And I had written home," she cried, with a sudden wail, "to tell everybody in New York about the grand marriage that she was going to make - mentioning no names, of course, but saying how the wedding would probably be at the New Year; and we would all probably come over for Easter. Ah! how they'll crow over me now! And Revelstone just as dead, and poor Bettina just as coldshouldered as ever! Mr. Kilbreth!"

She brought him up at attention, firing his name at him suddenly like a pistol-shot. For his mind, to speak the truth, had gone back with insistent, dumb grieving, to his own trouble, which lay like a blister over his heart

-to the scornful, polished words which Bettina had addressed to him, and the little token which she had so contemptuously returned. Even granting that it had been hard for the girl to be thus probed, possibly blamed on the subject by her stepmother, was that any reason for her recoiling upon him with so deadly a blow?

"Yes," he replied hastily; "yes, Mrs. Lonley?"

She leaned toward him, important, mysterious, commanding, "Mr. Kilbreth, you cannot deny you owe us a certain reparation! Now, as it is probable that you know other people

in Paris-"

She paused abruptly; and he read her unspoken meaning in her eye. "I am sorry, Mrs. Lonley," he returned, with sincere regret, "but, in the first place, as you see, I have no skill in these matters. In the second, I am sorry to say, I sail for America in a fortnight at the latest. My Aunt Ariana, you see--"

The face before him relaxed into lines of sudden interest. "Your aunt, Mrs. Vanrevel?" Mrs. Lonley inquired, pronouncing the name of her own home-grown aristocrat in a tone of respect which no title of prince or of duquesa had ever been able to compel from her. "Mrs. Vanrevel, of Newport and New York? Is it possible"her tone quickened in the glow of sudden enlightenment-"is it possible, you and your aunt are friends again?"

"I had a letter from my aunt this afternoon," responded Kilbreth; while he marveled, in the secret depths of his heart, how small an alleviation was brought to the profound wretchedness of his own outlook, by the apparently triumphant prospects outlined by his own words. "She asks me to return home to her immediately," he added; "she promises to let me keep on with my studies, and all that I am interested in; and she says that the old place is waiting for me always!"

"Then," cried Mrs. Lonley quickly, "you are her heir again-the heir of the Kilbreth-Vanrevel estates, and

all?"

"I suppose so," Kilbreth nodded. he responded politely, and with an accent that showed the profound indifference which he felt. But Mrs. Lonley, with a sudden vigorous friendliness very different from her scornful upbraiding of a few moments before, was

shaking his hand.

"Well, I declare, if it's not the most romantic thing!" she gushed. "I congratulate you, Mr. Kilbreth; indeed I do! You are quite a personage now, aren't you? You'll be one of the directors of the Metropolitan, I suppose, won't you?-and the people will turn and stare after you when you walk through the Waldorf. The wandering heir restored to his rights—quite a little romance! Yes, a romance!" Her tone quivered in sudden excitement, her little gray eyes lit in the sparkle of a new and delicious idea. "Yes, a romance!" she repeated the word a second time, with a sudden ingratiating silkiness of accent. "But only one thing lacking," she added, in a cooing tone, "to render it complete. Mr. Kilbreth-you who have so much skill as a match-maker-why don't you make a match for yourself?"

Her words were ambiguous, but the meaning behind her tone and her sharp light eyes was unmistakable. And at this sudden useless opening before him of the heaven toward which his famished soul looked with so bitter and hopeless a longing, the situation became on the instant an intolerable one. He had tried his best, and his intrigues had ended in failure and unhappiness for all concerned, himself included. Not, indeed, that he objected to taking his share of the punishment, but just at this present moment he felt his powers

of resistance giving away.

He rose to his feet. "I regret very much, Mrs. Lonley," he replied, with an attempted lightness in his tone, "that I know of no one who, at the moment, would be willing to make a match of it with me. So you see I must content myself-

Mrs. Lonley, springing heavily to her feet, laid a detaining hand upon his arm, "Listen, Mr. Kilbreth!" she

cried, and the tenseness of her tone showed the sharp anxiety of her inner thought; "don't you think, after all, that you owe us some reparation?"

Kilbreth looked down at her with a sigh. "My dear Mrs. Lonley," he replied gently, "words cannot express how deeply I feel that fact. But, you see, in this regard, I happen to have authentic, first-hand information that any reparation that I could offer would not be accepted. So, unfortunately, the matter seems to end right here."

"But I will speak to Bettina herself!" insisted Mrs. Lonley feverishly. "I will show her how matters stand, and

I think I can promise you-"

The young man put her insistent eloquence aside with his offered hand, "Good-by, Mrs. Lonley! I cannot tell you how deep is my regret, and that of Monsieur des Ursins, that this unfortunate affair should have come about. But, you see, I cannot have your daughter importuned or made miserable in my name. Even to please you, Mrs. Lonley, I cannot thrust upon Miss Bettina attentions which I have good reason to believe distasteful to her! Will you give her my adieux, please? And now-good-by, Mrs. Lonley!"

In a gesture of passionate resentment, she turned away from the hand which he held out to her. And with a last glance at her broad satin back and high-flung, shaking head, he turned despairingly and walked from the

room.

XVI.

A little mountain breeze, thin and cool, was rustling the shadowy laburnum-trees and stirring the pale flowers which nodded and glistened in the moonlit garden. From the other side of the gray marginal willows glanced the ghostly whiteness of the swift, whispering Pique. The moon was nearly full, very high up, and very small in the sky; but, beneath her luminous whiteness, the circling barricade of the huge shadowy Pyrenees was filled like a cup with the valley's silvery mists.

Evan Kilbreth, stepping out upon the

smooth white driveway of the Villa des Quinconces, shivered in a sudden chill that was not all the touch of the keen night air. "It's a miserable business!" he said to himself helplessly. Then the pang of his own self-reproach was swept away by the sudden bitter consciousness that near at hand, somewhere behind those closed, unseeing windows, lay the beautiful face which was so dear to him; and which, perhaps, he was never to see again.

Suddenly he started . . . listened. It was not perhaps that a voice came to his ears so much as the soft, vibrant quality of singing that stirred and tingled in the air about him. And in a sharp, delicious pang of memory, he recalled that first image that he had of her—a glimmer of white among green, environing leaves; a wandering voice "singing in the wilderness." Was it possible that she walked there by the brookside, behind the willows?

For a moment he reflected, then turned with sudden resolution; and a quick, illuminating flash of scorn for his own unmanly doubts and hesitations. What right had he, after all, to accept as final the unexplained and petulant decree which she had sent to him? If he really loved her, it was his part as a man to tell her so: to demand a reason for her rejection of him; to explain and to demand an explanation. In blinding, transporting radiance, hope blazed up again in his heart; and turning upon the graveled path he directed swift steps toward the dim, blended murmur of the unseen singer and the hurrying rivulet. "For the roses are vanished," the words, though faint, were unmistakable, "and the rosemary is dead-

He stood still for a moment, searching with eager eyes through the black, wavering shadows with which the moonlight had filled the pale willows by the river brink. Then suddenly, farther down the stream, the darkhanging sprays stirred and parted, and a white apparition started up—a slender white shape with glistening hair, which moved swiftly toward him across

the purple and silver garden.

"Mr. Kilbreth"—a voice came to him through the wavering moonlit mists—"is that you, Mr. Kilbreth?" The young man's heart stood still, then throbbed in a bliss that stopped his breath. For the voice that he heard was the voice of Bettina.

"Is that you, Miss Lonley?" he spoke doubtfully, afraid to show the joy that he felt; but with quick accents she put aside his hesitating words,

"I don't know whether you are willing to speak to me," she said hesitatingly; "after that letter that I sent you a little while ago. But I must ask you—yes, you'll think me very strange to speak of it, perhaps, but I must ask you—" Her firm accents died away in a little painful flutter, and her large eyes, luminous among the shadows, reflected the moonlight into his own.

"Yes, Bettina!" returned Kilbreth, with an unconscious use of her familiar name, and an eagerness which ran and kindled in his voice. "Yes, ask me, ask me?"

She flung out her bare white arms with a sudden, painful gesture. "I heard this afternoon," she said, in a voice whose faint accents showed the pain she felt, "that it was you, you, who were arranging my marriage with the Prince des Ursins; and moreover that you were acting as mama's paid intermediary in the business—that you were taking her money as your fee for selling me into a marriage with a man for whom I was not even supposed to care—"

Her voice died away in cadences of a controlled but profound suffering. And Kilbreth, tempering his voice to a calmness which matched her own, answered slowly:

"There has been, I regret to say, a slight misunderstanding between Mrs. Lonley and me on that very point. It is true, I introduced Monsieur des Ursins to you and to your mother, and I hoped—at one time—that the acquaintance might result in your marriage. However, that I assure you is in the past! And as to the money—"In spite of himself he checked his words in a little laugh of indignation.

"Yes, the money!" Miss Lonley took a step nearer to him, looking eagerly into his face. Her beautiful face and shining eyes were very near his own, and he heard her light breathing come and go beside him.

"Only a moment ago," he said calmly, "your mother did me the honor to hand me a check, which I had the honor of declining. There was, it seemed, some question of a copper investment which she believed she had made for me. I beg your pardon for mentioning your mother's name in such a connection, Miss Lonley; but I really think it would have been fairer to me if, before she mentioned the matter of the money to you, she had waited to see whether I would accept it or not!"

But Bettina's soft voice, filled with a joy which she made no attempt to disguise, was in his ears. "Ah!" she cried. "I am so glad, so glad. For, you see, when I came home this evening, and mama came to me with all the horrible tales that dreadful old man had been telling her"—she shivered and passed her hands in a quick gesture before her face—"and then when mama told me that you . . . that you—"

Her voice broke suddenly in a tender confession that sent Kilbreth's heart to flying. "Bettina!" he said; but she commanded his silence with a gesture of the soft hand which, in a sudden, uncontrollable impulse, he caught in his own.

"Listen," she breathed tensely; "you were in earnest, you meant them really, all those things that you have said to me about Colinette?"

He answered her triumphantly. "My Colinette? Yes, I love her better than all the rest of the earth put together!" And in the eyes which she turned upon him, he saw a sudden transparent gleam.

"And I," she breathed softly, "am Colinette?"

"You are far more, you are Bettina!" was all the answer that he could give. But she snatched her hand from his, and stood for a moment facing him with sudden solemnity.

"Then listen," she said quickly. "They are all as binding as ever they were, you see; the obligations that I told you of this afternoon. I ought to make a great marriage-with the Prince des Ursins, perhaps-I ought to repay my debt to mama, and give her something in return for all the expense and the worry, and the disgrace that I have brought upon her. But I have been thinking it over-and I can't, no I can't! I know that you are poor, I know that you have, as you yourself would say, no position to give me. Poor mama will never give her consent; and I own, I hate to think of disappointing her so bitterly. But, you see, there is something that I hate to think of even worse! And if you really love me as you say, then I'm willing, yes, I'm eager, to give up all the money and the tiresome fine clothes, and live in a dingy little apartment in the Latin Quarter, or a poky flat in Harlemfor either would be in Arcady! For with you, you see, it will be Arcady. I can trim my own hats, you see, and I can cook pretty well."

She held out her hands to him, and the brightness of her beauty radiated through the silvery mists of the evening about her. "Ever since that night at the Trocadero, four years ago," she breathed softly, as his hands closed upon hers—"ever since that night, I think, Evan . . . if you had come and asked me— Ah!" she cried, with a sudden terror in her voice. "And to think how near I came to losing you, after all! But look—"

She drew her hand from his clasp and held up her long gold chain, dangling half-seen in the dusk. "Your heart," she whispered, "that I sent back to you this evening like the little fury that I was. And you threw it into the river again; and the river brought it back, straight back to me. See, I found it here in the moonlight only a

moment ago!"

With gentle fingers he detached the token from the chain. "No," he said, "this that you have found is not mine, but Lucien's, that I carved and tossed into the Pique a month ago. And here it goes, back to the lady of his love!" Turning, he tossed the tiny symbolical fragment out into the moonlit, murmuring waters at his feet.

"The other heart marked with E lies here in my pocketbook with your wicked little letter," he said. "You shall have it, and my own heart, too, some day, perhaps, if you will pay me for them! And now—ah Bettina, my dear, dearest Bettina!"



NEW-YEAR'S DAY

S HOULD flinty fate give to your eyes a page
Blank as an unwrit letter, or a screen
Whereon no mark of artist's brush is seen
And bid you a blind, empty future gauge,
Why should you rail at fate, and vain wars wage?
Could you not, rather, sweet new stories glean
And bravely write them there, with, in between,
Illumined scrolls, learned from a bygone age?

Ah, never uninscribed life's books appear;
Blotted they are, blending both hope and dread,
Like shadows of a wind-blown vine cast there.
Yet now, among them all, trace without fear,
Bold lines, and glories of rich color spread;
Amid the flick'ring fancies make the missal fair.

MARY ALMEE GOODMAN.



(Copied from an old ledger, badly scorched and found lying in the fireplace of a deserted line-camp in the edge of the Badlands, presumable belonging to the 7-Bar outfit.)



IO says a cow-puncher can't keep a diary of his soul-yearnings and his heart's deep pages? That man's a liar, for I'm going to cut loose right now and keep a real sissy-book; I admit

I'm some handicapped, right in the start; I regret that I can't let down my back hair and wrap the folds of a paleblue what-you-may-call-'em around my willowy form. A red and yellow Navajo blanket's the closest I can come; and, being it's my saddle-blanket, it wouldn't cover a quarter of me-seeing I'm six feet and then some. But, barring them drawbacks, I guess I ain't so far outclassed. I've got a book here about the size and color of a side of bacon, and a whole bottle of ink, and a nickel's worth of steel pens; if that don't see me through till spring, there's a lead-pencil—the flat, carpenter kind in the knife-box, that I'm holding for reserve.

Lord! this is sure a miserable way to put in a winter—feeding poor cows and calves that's on the lift about half the time, and need tailing up regular for their breakfast; and watching waterholes and washing dishes; and studying up new and striking ways of giving vent to my feelings. This here diary's my latest invention; and I've named it on the outside with a piece of hot baling-wire. "My Silent Pardner" is what I call it; and I consider that a

swell name for a diary. So, pard, listen to my tale uh woe.

There was an ad in a magazine, the other day, that got me where I live. It started out: "Are you satisfied with your job?" I ain't—not what you can notice. I'm overflowing with pessimessem (let 'er go, pard-but I'd gamble that word could stand some fixing!), and so I answered the ad. I got the answer to-day; and the way they called my bluff was sure amazing. I had to give the names of three solid citizens that know my pedigree-which I done; put down Sheep Charlie, and the old man at the home ranch, and old One Eye-but not by them names, of course. And I had to dig up forty plunks, which I was mighty lucky to have. They're going to give me absenttreatment for lame spelling (which I sure need!); and crooked grammar, and how old is Ann, and the like. They guarantee a cure or money refunded, which looks to me like a square deal. I'm going to put up a mail-box over on the stage trail; and old One Eye has promised faithful he'd stick my doses of learning into it.

Say! when I come up out of this coulée in the spring, oozing language out of every pore, I guess, maybe, the boys won't go in the air none—eh? I had my choice on a lot of brands, but I bid for grammar, spelling, orthography, and oratory. If I can wise up this winter like they say I can, I'll just turn on the oratory in round-up, pard; and then watch the boys turn

handsprings backward. Pard, you watch my smoke. Before long I'll be able to indite these pages with a flow of words that'll sure put a crimp in your spine. . . . Eh-awh! . . . You're dull company, pard—maybe because you're so harmless. I'm going to turn in, if you ask me. But I'll keep'er a-going—if the ink-bottle don't freeze and bu'st, some of these balmy nights. Guess I'll take it to bed with me—how's that? So-long, pard.

I never dated that last outpouring—but I think it was somewhere's about the middle of November. That's the worst fault you've got, pard. You don't know a cussed thing but what I tell you; so they's no use asking you what day it was. Anyway, this is some time after—and if you ask me how many days, I'll likely lie about it—be-

cause I don't know.

Got my first dose of wisdom, pard, and say! they didn't do a thing but send a string of questions from here to Bent Willow for me to answer. I guess they aimed to find out just how wide and deep is my sea of ignorance; and how long it's going to take to wipe it off the map. It made me think of the district-school examinations I used to lay under dad's barn to get away from. It was all typewrote; and you are supposed to be put on your honor as a gentleman not to ask no help from anybody. I'm sure safe from cheating at this game, pard-with fifteen miles of unharrowed country between here and the home ranch. Clem Ralston's dead honest; and no cards up his sleeve. His own think-works grappled, unaided, with these- Now, look at this one! "What is an article? How many are there? Name them."

I'll tell you what I done, pard. I named over pretty near every article in the shack, including two frying-pans, and told 'em to come again and I'd complete the list. I guess that'll hold

'em for awhile.

I got to quit you, pard, and buckle down to the rest of them fool questions. I never did have much use for grammar, but I've got forty plunks in this game, and I'll have 'em jumping sidewise, back there, but what I'll get the worth of my money out of 'em. I'd like to be cached in a corner when that bunch of answers rolls in! So-long, pard. You're sure all right, in some ways. You're blame quiet—but then you don't never interrupt, nor contradict what I say; nor bum me for cigarette papers or tobacco. I've held down camps with worse fellows than you; and that's no dream. I wish I'd invented you before; you beat solitaire hands down.

Say, pard, what do you think? I like to 'a' fell dead when I got my bunch of answers back to-day. They was corrected right up to par, all right-all hashed up with red ink. And the Lord have mercy, pard-it was a woman! I can tell by her fine, scrimpy writing. And you know what I done when I come to the interjection question? I let my mind kinda run on that red cow that had got down on the ice and wouldn't get up-to be sure, the poor brute couldn't-and kept fighting me when I went to help. And on the strength of those memories, I handed out a bunch of interjections that fair made the paper smoke. The fact is, I made a damfool business of it all around. And what do you think she wrote along the edge of them cuss words? She wrote-so fine I like to turned cross-eyed reading it-"My strenuous young friend, we do not carry a line of asbestos for the use of our pupils. Have you no less sulfurous interjections in your vocabulary? Try again, please." That's it, word for word; and she drawed a line under the please, pard.

So I combed my hair and put on a clean tie—I hadn't fixed up none the other time; but, seeing I was dealing with a lady, it looked more polite—and I wrote some interjections that she ought to like: "Oh! ah! indeed! good land! the idea!" and "Oh, fudge!" What do you suppose she'll say to that bunch, pard? I wonder if she'll laugh? Or maybe she's one of them stern, foureyed damsels that takes life seven times

more serious than a Hard-shell Baptist. No, I guess she don't, either. That little red ink spiel sounds like she could take a joke; don't it, pard? "My strenuous young friend, we don't carry a line of asbestos——" no, sir, no foureyed old maid would write like that! and I'll gamble on it. So-long, pard. We'll wait and see what she says.

Mister! it's a long ways from here to New York. I'll bet old One Eve has lost my long envelope-and if he has, he'd better send in his last words to his mother, for I'll sure wipe him off the face of Montana. Pard, you're no good. Why don't you say something? I guess it's solitaire for yours truly to-night. I'd sure like to know what the Red Ink Maid thought when she cast her optics over my last bunch of answers to her leading questions. She writes a mighty pretty hand; little and even and plain as print. I guess I'll do a few stunts on your back, pard, if you don't object. I want to practise some before I send her anything more. I used to think I wrote good enough. I've got too blame careless and out of practise these last three or four years. It's a wonder she could read what I wrote, that first time. I thought it was a man I was addressing, so I didn't take much pains-just scratched it off any old way. There's about forty thousand more pages of you, pard, than I'll ever need for the deep pages of my heart (I read that somewheres, and it sure sounds good in a diary), so I'll just get down to biz, and see if I can't make marks that don't bear such a close resemblance to snow-bird tracks. So-long.

It's snowing to beat four of a kind. If old One Eye don't get his stage through to-morrow, I'll sure report the old cuss. I wonder if he did hold out my mail last time; it'd be just like him—the old horse-thief. A man that'll hold out mail on a fellow ought to be sent up for life. Hanging's too good for a man like that. I'll just give him till to-morrow night; and if he don't make good there'll be something doing

out on the Bent Willow trail, now I'm telling you! So-long, pard. I got the blues bad to-night.

Well, I got my mail all right: but I froze my nose plumb solid waiting for old One Eye to come along. He's sure the slowest son-of-a-gun in seven States. She didn't distribute quite so much red ink around over my pages this time. I got down to business, and done the best I could remember. Lord. what a lot of time a kid wastes in school, learning things he chucks out of his mind soon as he gets out mixing with the real things of life! I made mistakes that I wouldn't 'a' been guilty of when I was a kid-but, on the whole, I guess I stacked up better than she expected I would, judging from my first play. She wrote on the edge againalongside the interjections. what she said: "These interjections would not hurt any one's feelings. I'm sure. You must have attended a Young Ladies' Seminary." Now, what do you think of that? She wanted 'em mild; and now she's got 'em, she don't seem real satisfied. Say, she does write a pretty hand! I'll bet she's about twenty-one, and has got brown eyes-the kind that shines-and a dimple in her right cheek. For two cents I'd write and ask her. What do you think, pard? Think she'd tell me to mind my lessons and never mind the teacher? Darn this long-distance school-teaching! I wisht they'd send her out here to hear my lessons; it's plumb sinful to waste postage-stamps like this. I've got to send in by One Eve and get some more -about a dollar's worth. But there's one thing I am going to do, pard, if it bu'sts the thing up right here. I'm going to write that Red Ink Damsel a nice little letter, and explain them in-(I'd gamble she's got teriections. brown eyes, all right—and a dimple.) I'm going to tell her that the first bunch -that smelled so rank of brimstonewas inspired by a big red cow that got down on the ice and decided she'd stay right there and wait for a chinook. And I'll tell her the mild bunch was caused by her criticism of the first ones. I

wonder how that'll strike her. If she knew the way I live-wouldn't she open them big brown eyes? For two cents I'd give her a deal about it-or, say! what's the matter of drawing a picture of me tailing up that red cowjust to illustrate them first interjec-tions? That's the stuff! I can draw a pretty good sketch when I try-only, I forgot: I haven't got a pencil-unless I use that flat one in the knifebox. And-lemme see. I'll draw one of me reading her red remarks on the edge of my paper-and I won't say a cussed word! That'll keep her guessing some. That's what-I'll make the pictures do the talking. Sure, she can't get offended at a couple of little sketches, can she, pard?

Pard, I'm learning fast. Can't you see how my writing's improved? sure let you stay under my bed a long time-'most a month, I guess. Lemme see; oh, I was just going to draw those (my Red Ink Maid got after me fierce for saying them. She's sure strict with a fellow) those pictures. Well, she savvied, all right—the little scamp! She drawed one herself, and sent it along inside my corrected lesson. It was a peaked-nosed, four-eyed female, built like a match-and the hair was drawed—no, drawn, that's it—in red ink. And she was laying back in a faint —or else it was hysterics—with a lesson in her hands-and I guess it was my first bunch of interjections, because the smoke was rising up from the pages in a cloud! You bet it's all right, pardas a joke. But she needn't think I'm going to accept that as a speaking likeness of her-my money's still up on the brown eyes and the dimple; and little white hands and a smily red mouth. If she don't look out, I'll tell her so, some of these days. Her peaked-nose, and lanky and four-eyed? Not on your life! Pard, she can't load me that way. I've sent her quite a bunch of sketches, that tells the awful story of my life in pretty good shape—if it don't sound too swell-headed for me to say so. And I keep my lessons right up to par, you bet! I don't want her to think

I'm as boneheaded as I let on that first time I went up against the game. She sure come back at me about themthose articles. So I sent her a picture of my shack—one where I was frying bacon with a cigarette in my face and my hat on the back of my head (but, really, pard, you know yourself I'm a swell housekeeper, and never smoke when I'm cooking; I just drew the cigarette in for a josh), and one where I was poring over my lessons, with my overcoat on and a cap pulled over my ears, and the breath coming out of my nostrils like the exhaust of a steamengine. And a lot more on the same plan-me where I was holding up old One Eye with a gun, and making him fork over my mail. I had it labeled "Grammar," so she couldn't think I was taking his roll. I ain't no highwayman, and I don't want her to get that impression of me, either, because-well, never you mind, pard, I hate to see even a diary get too blamed curious about a man's feelings.

My mail-box is drifted plumb full of snow, pard. I'm sure interested ingrammar. Most always I meet old One Eye two or three miles down the trail, so's to see how many mistakes I made last time. You bet your sweet life little brown eyes don't overlook any mistakes! She's got her little red ink tab on every flaw-if it ain't any more than a t that I never thought to cross. She's sure strict-that little maid. If she knew she was pointing out the mistakes of a great, overgrown son-of-a-gun like But I always draw Little Willy with his hat-crown grazing the ceiling, just to give her a hint of my size. Maybe, though, she takes it the other way, and thinks the shack's about as deep as a hotel pie. Mister! I never thought of that; maybe I'd better send my actual dimensions in figures-only she might get to thinking I'm stuck on my shape; and I ain't-not unless she was; and then I don't say but what I might get some nifty over my six-feettwo, and straight as a ramrod. I wonder if she likes black hair that waves quite a bit; and blue eyes. Gee! that sure sounds silly, don't it? So-long,

pard—I'm threatened with softening of the brain, I guess. I'll go stick my head in a snow-bank, and then go to bed. It's kinda funny, though-I'm always dreaming things about that Red Ink Maid. I wonder if she-

Jerusalem and little fishes! It's blizzarding-the worst I ever saw; and I spent two winters in North Dakota. Old One Eye never'll make it to-dayand I couldn't find the trail to waylay him if he did. The little maid'll wonder what's the matter if I don't get a lesson off day after to-morrow, when One Eve comes back. But if he don't get down to Bent Willow, he can't come

back, see?

Curse a country like this! I wonder if a fellow couldn't do pretty well in New York with what stake I've got laid up. If I sold out my bunch of horses-I know where I could place them, easy-I could scare up five thousand, I guess. That wouldn't be a drop in the bucket back there, though. I wonder—if she—but this ain't any country for a woman like her-educated like she is-and smart-

I take back all the mean things I said about old One Eye. That old boy is sure all right! He pulled in here last night just before dark with both hands frosted bad; and his nose as white as a lump of dough. He had my mail, all right. I sure got up a good supper for him-opened up my last can of apricots, that I've been saving for some event worth celebrating; a chinook, for instance. He staved all night, which was some awkward, seeing I had to talk to him, and couldn't do more than sneak a look at my lesson-and what she wrote. You'd think, pard, a man that's held down a line camp all by his little lonesome for three months would be tickled to death to have a garrulous party like One Eye to share his supper and bed. But I wasn't none overjoyed, only plain grateful for my mail, which I'd give up looking for. Now the Red Ink Maid won't have to wait for a whack at my weak points on grammar and spelling. I asked her once how many gazabos she was leading into the straight and narrow path of correct English, like she was me. She saidwell, never mind what she said-but she gave me to understand, anyway, that she wasn't drawing pictures promiscuous; nor scribbling little joshes on the margins of the bunch. It's straight business with all comers-except yours truly. I ain't real handsome, nor richbut I'm sure a lucky devil! So-long, pard. I've got a five-hundred-word essay to write. Teacher said so. guess I'll make it a parable, and tell her a lot of things I wouldn't dare to say She ain't so slow-she straight out. can savvy if she wants to; and answer accordingly. And if she don't want to, she can pass it up- If she does, though-

Pard, I may as well own up, first as last. My essay-oh, well, I done what sure took plenty of gall; I asked the Red Ink Maid to marry me-and I don't even know her name! But she suits me, all right, just the way she is -no name but Red Ink Maid; and no picture but what I've got in my mind. I don't count those comic valentine ones she's always sending. If she was ugly—on the dead—she'd draw 'em so's they'd flatter her. Oh, I never had much experience with love, but I know human nature. I know she's good to look at, or she wouldn't make such all-

fired ugly pictures of herself.

Anyway, I done the square thing this time. I didn't depict my own countenance for her to judge me by. I sent her a photograph—and I will say it's a peach. Natural as life; and I told her so. She may think I'm stuck on myself, but I ain't to blame if the Lord saw fit to give me features and hair. I never thought much about it before -but now I'm grateful to Him-and that's no dream. Maybe she'll like me better this way; and that's what counts from now on. The photograph was too wide for the envelopes they furnish; but I trimmed it down with my jack-knife so it would fit. I told her straight up that I loved her. I do all right-and I don't give a darn if folks do call me locoed loving a girl I've never even saw. I know her, all right. She's true blue, and sensible, and jolly; she suits me, all right. She's just the sort I could make a chum of and never get tired of; and work for and settle down with. I don't care if she ain't really pretty, or if her eyes are blue, maybe, instead of brown. But I can't say I'm much stuck on blue eyes, as a general thing; mine are blue. Still, I won't kick over a little thing like that.

And she's right there with the goods when it comes to brains or education. She told me she has to correct the papers of most a hundred seekers after wisdom; and all winter I've never caught her overlooking any mistakes I made. She holds me right up to the mark, let me tell you; and she marks me just what I've earned. Friendly as we've got to be, she's never showed no mercy when it comes to keeping tally. I get what's coming to me-and not a grain more. Do you know, I like that. It shows she'd be sensible and just, right through the game. She ain't one of the sentimental sort; nor the shifty sort that gets spiteful and does things just to be onery. I know, for I tried her on that. I drew a picture of her marking up my lesson onceand I made her out ten times worse than she ever did herself. She never got mad, though. She got back at me in a picture—the darndest-looking jay you ever saw she made me out. And she went right on keeping tab on me just the same-just as strict, and no stricter. I know how mean a teacher could be-for I found I was up against a narrow-minded cuss in the oratory game. He's a man, and a regular old maid kind of man, too. He'll get on the peck at something I say in my speeches -takes 'em personal, whether they're meant that way or not-and cuts and slashes 'em to beat the deuce. Oratory's no fun, anyway. I've kind of dropped that, and put my mind to the English lessons-and to the English teacher, I may as well admit.

Pard, what do you suppose she'll say? She must like me a little, or she wouldn't have got so chummy this winter. Don't it look that way to you? And if she had a fellow back there, it don't look to me like she'd have acted just the way she has done with me: it wouldn't be giving neither one of us a square deal. She ain't a flirt-leastways, that ain't the way I've got her sized up. If she was, she'd 'a' gone further, don't you see? She had a chance to say heaps of things that she didn't say. She would have gone further, though, if she was a bit flirty in her ways. I don't call it flirting the way we've been going on. She's never said a thing that a perfect lady wouldn't say. And if she looks at it the way I do, she won't think I'm a fresh kind of gazabo, either. She'll see I'm honest. anyway. Well, if she'll take chances on me. I'm sure willing to do the same with her. I guess we stand even there. She knows me just as well as I do her, only she does know my name, and I don't hers. Well, pard-it's up to her. So-long.

Pard! Pard!

I've done to-day what I never done before since I went to punching cows; and that was when I was a kid. I most died trying to keep from laughing. It's something a man can't talk about, but this diary business of setting down your thoughts as they come to you certainly is a habit. I've got so I have to write whatever's on my mind. It's kind of like telling a friend all your troubles that you know won't go shooting off his mouth about it afterward.

I heard from Her. It didn't come with the grammar lesson this time, but in a separate envelope. Pard, she likes me-she didn't say so, just like that, but if she hadn't liked me a heap, 'most as much as I do her, she'd never 'a' wrote the way she did. It was the sorriest letter I ever read, pard. Oh, it sounds foolish for a cow-puncher like me to go on like that. But she's all alone in the world, and she was educated in an orphan's home. Think of that! Never had any folks, nor any real home-just like a chicken that's raised in one of these big wooden brooders, and kept warm with lamps

stuck underneath, instead of snuggling under its mother's wing, and her

cr-r-rr-ing to it.

It was sure sorrowful, pard, that little letter, all wrote out on lesson-paper, so 'twould look familiar, in that cheerful red ink we'd been playing with, like as if we'd been a couple of children making mud pies. No, I won't show it to you, even, you dog-eared, brokenbacked old silent pardner-except just as much as I darn please; and that part won't be the beginning nor the end of the letter-not by a long shot. Those sections are for the exclusive use of my Red Ink Maid and me; and if you're wise for your years, pard, you won't press me further. But on along from this page here I'll let you in, considering the way you stood by me in the blizzard; and your interest, without crowding me none, in my education.

—So you see, Clem, dear, it is all quite impossible. Because a man who can look with his heart in his eyes, the way you look out of that photograph (even that stiff pose and crude finish and glazed card couldn't spoil you entirely, you see,) would never want to look at me. I'm sending my photograph in the sealed package enclosed. Oh, how I wish I wasn't such a plain, meager, little thing, just like my handwriting, that's always so economical of paper. Maybe being brought up in a charity school makes me afraid that both myself and my letters will be unwelcome if we take up too much space in the world.

But the photograph won't tell you the worst. It's been the temptation of a lifetime to let it go without an explanation, but I won't. Only promise that you'll look at it—a good long look, dear—before you turn it over and read what's written on the back.

Maybe you surmise just how long it took me to slit open that flat little package, regardless of old One Eye sitting there, more intent on my business than on anything that ever occurred on his claim. Well, pard, it's Saturday night, and you've tried all the week to be good, and so I'll let you have a peek. How does that photograph affect you? Slim, ain't she, as she says; but all curves, that she neglected to mention, from the line of her topknot to the tips of her shoes. Delicate arms. Not much strength in them, hey? But perhaps you'll be kind

enough to observe the dimple in the wrist. And the gown—I suppose it's just some kind of white cotton; and like enough she made it herself, being naturally talented; but don't she wear it like a duchess—she that calls herself a

charity child?

Don't it make your old leather cheeks kind of moist, pard, to hear a girl with a face like that talk about always having been lonely? Why, her facehaven't I mentioned her face? She's got the sweetest face God ever gave a woman-big, wistful eyes that make your own eyes water to look into, even on paper. How she could josh and devil a man, with them eyes in her head, is a plumb mystery to me. And they're brown. I'll swear to it. And the sweetest little mouth; droopy at the corners-and no wonder, with the deal she's had to go up against. And her hair waves as much as mine does; but hers curls soft and pretty round her forehead-say, her forehead is pretty! A man would want to plant a kiss on it pretty frequent—and on that droopy little mouth.

While my eyes were on hers, I plumb forgot her telling me to read what she'd written on the back of the photograph. But old One Eye brought me out of my trance, tilting forward to catch a squint for his share. So I twisted the card over in the palm of my hand, and

I see:

Oh, Clem, Clem, do you think my hair is pretty, because, you see, it's curly and soft and fair, and there's loads of it? With the light shining on it that way, I suppose you think it's golden. Clem, it isn't. It's snow-white. I don't know why, but it began to turn when I was seventeen, and now there isn't a brown hair left. Maybe it is the result of the privations of my childhood, and my griefs and loneliness. Anyway, my hair isn't like a young wife's; it's like, yes, I will say it, it's like an old maid's. Oh, Clem Ralston, the only man I've ever loved, I know you wouldn't care for me, now you know. So good-by, good-by.

I whirled that card over again; and, sure enough, the hair, tossed up in that high-stepping way, with a black velvet lariat round it, was for all the world like some pictures a guy showed me once of foreign ladies who never went

into society unless their hair was covered as thick with powder as the prairie with a snow-squall. Then it all came before me like a magic-lantern view; and I could just see her, with her brown eyes, and those pen-and-ink eyebrows; her cheeks flushing like an early rose; the soft mouth with a dimple at each corner, instead of a sorrowful droop. There she was, the loveliest creature on this footstool, crying her eyes out, and scaring me so that a cattle stampede was child's play—and all because her hair is like moonlight instead of sunlight—

As I've said before, I thought I'd pass away, trying to keep from bu'sting out laughing, with old One Eye staring me out of countenance. And, naturally, one can't laugh at a lady in the presence of others—not in Montana, that is. Bless her pretty head! I'm plumb glad, pard, that it ain't a schoolmarm, or an angel, either, that I'm marrying.

but a Real Woman.

I tell you right now, pard, your hours are numbered. I'm going to pitch you, head first, into the fireplace in a minute. And I'm going to roll my bed and hit the sod for the home ranch, and draw my time, and catch the first train for New York. I'm going to get that little maid, and show her that she's got a whole lifetime of happiness to her credit; and I'm her banker. I'll take that droop out of her mouth and make it smily, like it ought to be, or—

I'm going to marry her before another week rolls round—and the bunch of wisdom-seekers can hunt another teacher. I'm going to get my learning right at home. Home! do you hear that, pard? I know where I can get a peach of a ranch for sixteen hundred—right on the edge of a pretty creek, and with a grove back of the house. Pard, I hate to quit you, but my time's limited. You've done your part. . . . Now I'm going to do mine. Solong.



PERENNIALS

THE bitter cold around us clasps and closes;
Frost, the chill gleaner, leaves no fields to reap;
And where the garth was riotous with roses
The inexorable snows have drifted deep.

Yet is the chrism, contentment, not denied me,
Despite the tightening cincture wan and bleak,
For I behold with you, O love, beside me
Perennial roses upon Beauty's cheek!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.





off with Clara waving her hand and George waving his hat, Mrs. Steele, standing in the fore-front of the crowd of guests, waved her handkerchief vigor-

ously. She was very tired, and the black silk which the town fashion decreed unto the mother of even a June bride was very oppressive; but nevertheless her gesticulation was hearty and energetic, for Mrs. Steele was one who

never shirked any duty.

The carriage disappeared, and the guests returned into the house. The festivity was practically over; and the bride's mother, as she heard the rattle of wheels coming from the stables, felt her eyes involuntarily marking the rice upon the floor, while her thoughts fluttered toward the carpet-sweeper.

"I do hope you aren't too tired," Arabella Popp cried, running up just then to say good-by. "Oh, dear Mrs. Steele, do promise me that just as soon as we're gone you'll lie down—will you?"

we're gone you'll lie down—will you?"
"Well, I don't know," said Mrs.
Steele, smiling, "There'll be a good

deal to do first, I fancy."

"Oh, but don't do it," said Arabella Popp; "just leave it. I promised Clara that I'd tell you that her last wish was that you should just leave everything."

"Well, I'll certainly try to carry out Clara's last wish, now that she's gone," said Mrs. Steele, good-humoredly. She was not only good-humored, but also sensible; and had, besides, a sense of humor.

"I do wish I could stay with you," continued Arabella Popp. "Clara was so afraid that you would be lonely."

"Oh," said Mrs. Steele, with a sudden sense of alarm, "I am never lone-

ly. Pray-pray believe me."

"You dear, brave thing," cried Arabella Popp, catching her around the neck; "you sweet, courageous creature, you! Well, I shall run in to-morrow, anyhow."

"Pray don't trouble over me," said Mrs. Steele, readjusting that portion of the wedding decorations which encircled her own throat. She never had liked Arabella Popp; and now she liked her less than ever. But she still smiled.

"So awfully so'y to say goo'-by, don't you know"—it was George's chum, Harold Henbane, now—"so awfully, awfully so'y to say goo'-by." As Harold Henbane had his hand out, Mrs. Steele had no choice but to put hers into it. "So awfully so'y to have to"—Harold Henbane hesitated, then suddenly remembered—"oh, to be sure—to say goo'-by, don't you know."

Well, Clara had had a nice wedding, and every one had had all the turbot, green turtle, and—champagne that they could ask (and drink). Mrs. Steele wasn't going to regret anything now—not even while Harold Henbane was working her arm slowly and automatically up and down. He stared fixedly over her head at an oil-portrait of Clara's grandmother's third husband.

"So awfully so'y to say goo'-by," said Harold Henbane meditatively.

"I'm sure it's very good of you," said Mrs. Steele, struggling to free herself. "Oh, but it isn't," said Harold Henbane; "fact is, I promised—what the devil did I promise? Oh, yes—fact is, I promised George to tell you I'd stay all night to-night to keep you from being lonesome—an' I will, too—I will—fact is, I'd like to."

"Oh, no indeed," cried Mrs. Steele, with great emphasis. "I can't let youindeed I can't. You mustn't think of

it."

Harold Henbane looked alarmed. "Mustn't I?" he said, in great confusion. "I wasn't thinking of it. Really, I wasn't. I hope you'll believe me when I give you my word. I hope you'll overlook it.'

"Why, of course," said Mrs. Steele.

"Will you really, now?"

"Yes, yes."

"You aren't fooling me-are you?"

"No, no."

The tears suddenly flooded Harold Henbane's eyes.

"So awfully so'y to say goo'-by," he said sadly, loosed her hand, and de-

parted.

"Oh, Drusilla, I can't-I really cannot leave you like this"—it was Mrs. Kent, an old, old friend. "I tell Crawford"-Crawford was Mr. Kent-"I tell Crawford he can just trot on home alone, and I'll stay here. You'll be lonesome."

"Oh, no," cried Mrs. Steele, "I won't consent to your thinking of staying with

me, Harriett; indeed I won't.'

"That's so like you, Drusilla; always trying to think of others. But I know you, and I know how your heart is breaking, and I'm not going to leave you alone here; no, I'm not." Mrs. Kent was holding both of Mrs. Steele's hands, and jumping mildly about in the fervor of her friendship. Mrs. Kent was totally unaccustomed to champagne, and had no idea what she was jumping about for; or, indeed, that she was jumping about at all.

"But, Harriett, I shall not be lone-

some-I do assure you."

"Don't tell me," cried Mrs. Kent, her voice and her antics on the increase; "don't tell me, Drusilla. I know how strong you are; I see how weak you are; I know the struggle you're struggling; I know the ache you're aching; I know--"

"Harriett," said Mrs. Steele firmly, "you are talking foolishly. Go straight

home to bed."

"Oh, dear, I believe I ought to," cried

Mrs. Kent. "I feel so queerly. Drusilla: I never felt so before. I'm happy, and yet I want to cry, too-and somehow my legs do twitch so with nervousness. A wedding is so trying, I—"
"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Steele, with

great force of purpose. "Now go,

Harriett."

"But I shall come to-morrow," exclaimed Mrs. Kent: "I shall come tomorrow. Oh, Drusilla, say I may come to-morrow? Because if you don't say that I can come to-morrow, I shall stay to-night."

"Go now-that's all," said Mrs. Steele; and as she spoke the words she leveled upon her friend the sort of gaze that the lion-tamer keeps for the lion

So Mrs. Kent went. And one by one. or two by two, or a carriage-load at a time, they all went finally. It took patience, for the idea that Mrs. Steele would be lonesome was very prevalent -astonishingly prevalent, in fact. Still,

they all did go finally.

As soon as the house was empty except for herself and her household, the bereaved parent divested herself of the stiff and binding black silk dress, summoned the servants about her, called for brooms and dust-pans, and began forthwith to set the house of mirth once more in order. It was very nearly nine o'clock when they were through, for the work dragged a good deal, not only on account of the relaxation natural after a day of great doings, but also because there was a good deal of furniture to be moved, and considerable unboxing to be accomplished before the temporary trustee of the wedding-presents could repose in perfect peace. George's uncle—the one who provoked expectations on the part of every one in the family-had dowered the happy couple with a clock, which could under no circumstances be left in a damp atmosphere. There is always the chance of rain, so that Mrs. Steele dared not risk the clock on the back piazza all night; in consequence, she, the gardener, the hammer, and the ice-pick formed a merry and able quartet until about halfpast eight; then the gardener dropped the hammer on his foot; from that time on the coachman had to finish the job.

Betweenwhiles, the telephone rang Arabella Popp and other constantly. friends entreated thoughtful Mrs. Steele to bear up and remember Clara was only gone for a fortnight, and that George was the best of men. At about quarter of nine, just as her mother had gone down cellar to sequestrate what was left of the champagne, Clara herself called up over the long-distance, to say that it hadn't been a bit dusty; that they were just taking the train, and that George was the dearest, dearest, dearest of men. She choked toward the last, and begged Mrs. Steele to remember that Clara loved her mother just the same as ever. Mrs. Steele, who was making up her mind that she really must have the wall phone altered to the kind where you sit down, blessed her, and told her not to risk missing the train by talking any longer. "George wants to say just one word," said Clara. Mrs. Steele waited for George's communication, but it was very short, consisting of the two brief words: "Mother, my-" and then a violent sneeze.

The caterer meanwhile had come to remove everything hired for the occasion. He and the cook disagreed violently as to a decorative center ornament which graced the mantel in the Mrs. Steele went out dining-room. there to calm them. As she was talking with the belligerents, the telephone rang again. The minister had left his goldrimmed glasses somewhere up-stairs; he thought in the bath-room, where he remembered taking them off to wash his hands. He said that he had hesitated to disturb Mrs. Steele, but on second thoughts had decided that a little effort might help her to rally her stunned forces after the blow of the

As soon as the minister hung up, Mrs. Kent got the line to say that she believed, after all, she would come out for the night if the Steele horses could drive a carriage in for her. Mrs. Kent added that she really could not see now why she had not remained when she

was out there. She said that she had had within her a strong feeling of duty to stay, but she had mistaken it for wedding-cake until after she got back to her own house. While Mrs. Steele was conversing with Mrs. Kent, and feeling more than ever how very necessary a sit-down telephone was to the sum of human happiness, the caterer fell from a step-ladder in the library, and came so near breaking his leg that nobody knew that he hadn't done it until a doctor was hurried there to say so.

It was fully eleven o'clock before the house was quiet after that episode. Mrs. Steele began to think that bed was never to be hers again on earth. She was "awfully" tired; she really ached all over. In her prayers she thanked God that Clara was an only child, and that her wedding was accomplished for all time. She fell asleep without any delay. It seemed only a few minutes later when she was awakened by the violent ringing of the front door bell—in fact, by a thumb steadily applied to an electric bell, so that its clangor echoed through the whole house.

She went to the window at once, and looked out into the fabled calm of a country place.

"Who's there?" she cried loudly.

"Telegram," came a voice from below. Of course she had to clutch her kimono and slippers and go downstairs, receive the missive, and sign for it.

Then she read it; it was from Clara.

Am thinking of you. Don't be lonesome. Ever yours with love, CLARA.

Just twelve words!

Mrs. Steele went back to bed. She felt a hundred times more tired than before; every bone in her body seemed to be singing with fatigue. Fortunately she wasn't long in getting to sleep again. Neither was she long in being wakened again. It was the same bell as before.

Horrors! Had she got to get up again?

"Who is it?" she screamed from the window, as soon as the ordeal of get-

ing out of the comfortable bed had been accomplished.

"Tel-ygram," came the voice from

below, in the dark.

This time, while going down-stairs, she slipped on a June bug that had managed to get into the house while the wedding-guests were getting out of the house. When one is prowling about alone in the dark, slipping on anything is most disagreeable.

The telegram was from George on this occasion. Still shaken from the wrench which she owed to the June bug, Mrs. Steele paused by the newel-

post to read this:

Clara bright and cheerful. Trust in me. ·and don't be lonesome. GEORGE

Just twelve words!

She climbed up-stairs again, and pitched herself upon the bed. Then she

It took an unusual din to arouse her the third time. The bell seemed to have been ringing hours before it succeeded .

in waking her at last.

She was dizzy with sleep. She sat up and thought at first that to make a further exertion would be a physical impossibility. But where there's a will there's a way. On her way to the window she collided with furniture entirely off the main route, for her staggering limbs almost refused to support her; but she got to the window in the end.

"What is it?" she cried tartly, out into the hush and charm of the night.

"Itsch a chellygram, mum," came the

reply.

"Take it back to the office and tell them not to send any more out tonight, do you hear-r-r?" she commanded wrathfully.

"Doanchewwantoreadit-t-t?" the boy

velled back.

"No, I don't."

With a mumble of astonishment at her lack of curiosity, he went crunching away over the gravel. Mrs. Steele returned to bed and tried to sleep once more: but this time it was no longer possible. She was too outraged and too nervous. Besides, she found that, after awhile, she heard queer sounds; stealthy footsteps without; and then one of the porch seats was roughly jarred. She sprang to the window and listened sharply! Yes, there was some one below; she could hear him distinctly. Oh, that wedding silver! What a prize for burglars!

She listened intently. The man was going around to the back of the house. She slipped to a side window, and heard the soft pad of his feet on a flowerbed. Horrors! what was to be done? Suddenly, leaning against a windowscreen for support, she called out: "Speak, or I fire!" a well-worn but usually effective phrase.

A slight cry sounded from below,

then:

"Oh, for God's sake don't, mum!" said a man's voice.

"Who are you?"

"I'm a watchman, mum." "Who sent you here?"

"Your son-in-law, mum; so you'd be

safe to-night whatever come."

Mrs. Steele recoiled abruptly from the window. She wondered why she had not adhered to her first presentiment of not wanting George to marry Clara. "I should have been asleep now if I had persevered in my opinion," she moaned bitterly to herself.

But it was of no use to consider such futilities now. George had probably meant the watchman kindly. At any rate, she must bear all in patience. So

she returned to the window.

"Try not to walk on the gravel, as that would wake me up again," she called out as mildly as she was able to

call out.

"Yes, mum; I sympathize with ye, mum. I've had a daughter married mesilf, mum. 'Tis the first as is hardest,

mum."

She went back to bed. Still impossible to sleep. The dawn was forever in coming. When it came, it was a rainy dawn. Mrs. Steele did fall asleep at about seven. At seven-thirty, Mrs. Kent telephoned to know if she should come at eight. The maid woke Mrs. Steele to know her answer: but Mrs. Kent had hung up before the maid returned. The result was that Mrs. Kent arrived at about eight. Arabella Popp came at nine with her aunt *and her knitting. It seemed that Arabella had promised Clara to do this the day before.

"I never break my word, not even if it rains," said Arabella Popp.

Mrs. Steele said "so she saw."

At nine-thirty Clara herself called up

on the long-distance again.
"Dearest mama," she said, "George is shaving; we have a telephone right in the room, so I can talk with you whenever I want to. I am talking over it now."

"Drusilla," said Mrs. Kent, who was very much in a day-after-the-party mood, "tell the dear child we are trying our best to distract you."

Mrs. Steele at that turned resolutely

upon the telephone.

"Clara," she said, with cruel distinctness, "I never slept last night; every one is kindness itself; every effort is being made to distract me; and I may remark that I am already half-distracted."

"Are you lonesome?" Clara asked tenderly.

"No-only sleepy," replied her mother.

"Oh, mama, you are always so droll! But don't this carry you back to your

own early wedded days?"
"I hadn't thought of it," said Mrs.
Steele; "but then you know I've often
told you that my honeymoon was the
only thing that your papa gave me for
a wedding-present; so George and his
sunburst could hardly recall him to me."

"Oh, George is too sweet!" said the bride; "he is beginning to shave the other side now."

"Well, I send him my best wishes," said the mother-in-law.

"He wants me," said the bride. "Good-by, dearest mama."

"Good-by."

When Mrs. Steele turned from the telephone Arabella Popp was rolling up her knitting.

"Do you know, I believe auntie and I will go home," she said, looking quite

red.

"And I'm going, too, Drusilla," said Mrs. Kent, looking quite white. "Now don't say a word, because I'm surely going."

"I'm not saying a word," said Mrs.

Steele. And they went.

As soon as she was alone, she unhung the receiver of the telephone and left it dangling. Then she told the servants to say to callers that she had departed for the Rockies. Mounting to her chamber, she proceeded to go to bed.

"I'll remember one thing when Clara's eldest daughter gets married," she said. "I'll tell my granddaughter to leave Clara in peace; to be lonesome or be anything else she likes."

Then she went soundly to sleep. Five minutes after, the maid aroused her with another telegram. She was exasperated, but she sat up calmly and read:

Dearest Mama, just getting into the buggy. Don't be lonesome for-Clara.

Just twelve words!

She stared at it. Then she saw that this should have preceded all the rest. She hardly knew whether to laugh or cry.

cry.
"Is the boy gone, Amelia?" she asked.

"No, ma'am."

"Give me a pencil, please—I want to write a message."

The maid obeyed. And Mrs. Steele wrote:

Dear George and Clara, I am not at all lonesome. Believe me.

Tuest toucless monds

Just twelve words!
"Take that to the boy," she said.



ISIONS OF



BY MARGARET SUTTON BRISCOE /B /S

IV. FINISHING SCHOOLS



WANTED to ask if you have heard again from Daphne?"

"Yes, dear little Daphne. She is so good about writing." "And what does she say?"

It was the children's music-teacher questioning me, Miss Earnestine we call her. She had stopped in to speak to me as she passed our house on her way to some other pupils. Our children go to her tiny apartment for their music-lessons.

I fished about in my work-basket; for I am still silly enough to keep these first letters of my first-born always somewhere near-by me, and produced

Daphne's last letter.

She writes very regularly," I said. "It's the one thing that her father made a kind of point of when she left us. He told her he was not asking for promises, but he'd like two home letters a week; 'If it's in the wood to do it,' he said. That sounds just like him, doesn't it? What are you laughing at, pray?'

This last to the Optimist, who was, I had supposed, reading the paper as he stood near the window, where he had retired when Miss Earnestine came in

to talk to me.

"I was laughing at you," said the "There never were such Optimist. children in the world-were there? There never was such a husband and father! Mercifully, you don't stop there—as your mantle covers us all, we condone it. Miss Earnestine, I heard her telling a mother of seven children the other day, that as a teacher, as a remarkable teacher, who simply lifted the children along, she could truthfully say that Miss Earnestine-

"You shall not laugh at her," cried Miss Earnestine. "If you could hear what she says of you behind your back, you wouldn't. You'd be overcome with

confusion and repentance."

"Pray spare him, then," I said; but my mind was a little absent, for I was greatly surprised, not at what Miss Earnestine had said, but at her manner to the Optimist-and his to her. was quite plain that she knew him familiarly. I had not supposed that they were acquainted at all, or very casually. In fact, I had been about to introduce them when Miss Earnestine first came into the room.

"Here is Daphne's letter," I said; "I think you may both like to hear parts of it. She begins by telling me she believes she likes everything about the school; that she thinks it a good school, with one exception-all the girls have hats turned up differently from hers;

and she'd like hers altered."

"Good gracious!" said the Optimist. "Our Daphne's gone! I thought she was nothing but a baby girl. She was when she left here. That change comes of sending her to one of those confounded finishing schools. I told you and King how it would be. When she left here the child was perfectly content with any sort of a hat; with a preference for none at all. She kept hers on with an elastic under her chin. That's the sure test. Just so long as a girl wears an elastic under her chin you've got your little daughter. The day she takes to hat-pins—she's grown up. Poor, poor little Daphne! Well, you and King can remember—I told you so. Does she call for hat-pins in this letter?"

"Oh, she called for them in her first letter home," I answered. "And, my dear Optimist, calling the child little Daphne won't keep the years from passing. By the way—who was it that was laughing at me not long ago for calling her little Daphne? Who asked me why I didn't keep her in bibs and push her in a perambulator? Who said I'd be accused of not wanting a grown daughter—at my age!—if I kept on talking of a girl, who is as tall as I am, as if she were still in sash and curls?"

"That's quite another thing," said the Optimist. "I maintain that I detest finishing schools. I don't hold they create fools, but I do claim that they can develop a fool quicker than any other known process."

"Then Daphne's immune," said Miss Earnestine. "She was my brightest pupil."

"Pooh!" said the Optimist scornfully. "Are you in the way of saying that to each of the mothers? Let me tell you, it's wasted ammunition here. This lady knows perfectly well that each of her children is the brightest child that all of their teachers ever taught-eh, madame? Miss Earnestine, I heard a misguided friend remark to her the other day, 'What handsome looking boys yours are-' And what did the lady reply? 'Oh, I don't care how they look! They are the very dearest-" but you've heard her. You'd think with all the children she's had, and seen, she would come to realize that children aren't patented. Lots of folks have them."

"Do you want to hear Daphne's letter?—or don't you?" I asked.

"I'm not particular about it," complained the Optimist. "I can tell you what it contains without hearing it—another good little girl gone wrong, and

all because her parents would not listen to the advice of their best and oldest friend."

"What are you talking about!" I cried. I really was half-amazed. It had been so hard to decide to send Daphne away. "I have no recollection of your making any remarks as to Daphne's going to boarding-school. You speak as if King and I had consulted you, and then gone in direct opposition to your advice, whereas, so far as I know, the subject was never once mentioned in your—"

"Bang! Whack!" said the Optimist. "Did you hear my bones rattle on the floor, Miss Earnestine? That's the kind of treatment an old bachelor gets. Well -those remarks are what I would have said if you and King had asked me. We'll leave it that way. The first time I ever saw dear little Daphne-when she introduced me to the rest of the nursery; I remember it as if it were yesterday-I was walking across the fields, looking for this lady's country house, where I was invited to visit. I ran across a small pond, whereon I discovered a little bit of a girl, who was being hauled out of a boat by a man who seemed to be the gardener. She was crying with rage; and she was trying to scratch his face. That was Daphne-dear little Daphne. Sweet child! They'll take all that spirit out of her, every dash of it, where she is now. She'll come home finished. She wasn't finished when the gardener came up against her little projects. plumped her down on the shore and looked at her.

"'You had ought to be spanked,' he said. 'You'll lose me me job yit. Git along home wid ye!' And then he headed her toward what I supposed was her home; and she set off as hard as her chunky little legs would go, howling—how she did how!! Whose child she was, where she was going, was perfectly plain to me. I caught up with her; and, sure enough, she led me where I

would be."

"You never before told me a word of all this; not a word!" I cried. "I didn't know you quite as well just then-you remember I'd been abroad. I wasn't sure how you'd take it-my recognizing your offspring on sight. It wasn't as if I could say her charming little visage betraved her origin. knew her before I saw her face. was her fittle winning way that I recognized. Do you remember one daywhen we were children-when you got

furious with me, and-"

"When I was a child," said Miss Earnestine hastily, "do you know, I actually didn't realize that I was a little girl? I remember just as well. I had the queerest fit of horror one day, when some one said to me: 'Don't do that, it's not like a little lady.' I didn't want to be a little lady. I didn't know I was in danger of being one. I'd never thought about it at all; and I went up in the attic and cried my eyes out."

"I've always taken for granted that you had that kind of early advantage." he said. "That's precisely the early education a girl ought to have." He spoke with deep conviction, and his

eyes dwelt approvingly on her.

She is not precisely beautiful; but yet Miss Earnestine has-beauty. It is not regularity of feature, but something less easily describable, which gives her charm. Character, industry, pluck-all these one might expect as the product of the life she has had to lead. The unexpected in her is a gay independence that is most fascinating; by reason of the fact that with it goes an exceeding sensitiveness and delicacy - qualities widely different from the grim front that so many women who have to be self-supporting present. Added to this peculiar little air of distinction, Miss Earnestine has an attractive bodily grace; she moves, as I had often noted, very daintily; every gesture, every turn of her throat, hand, waist, has finish. That's the word which defines her-finish. She knows how to walk, and to hold herself quite wonderfully, when she is not too hurried or too overtired. She and a girl friend of hersa physician-lived in a wee apartment together, keeping up their bachelor-girl light housekeeping. I knew nothing of the details of their ménage.

Miss Earnestine was interesting me more and more. For a girl of her age she had seen much of life; and she had in recent years, at least, of necessity led a rather Bohemian existence. Why is the bloom not brushed from her? Trained elegance of carriage, gesture, and speech I had not customarily found in bachelor-girls. They were freer in all respects; less conventional in gait, in air; while in appearance and manner they were less polished. What power was it that had so conserved in busy, hard-working Miss Earnestine this delicate physical expression, which, while perfectly unconscious, yet extended even to a control of the eyelids and the lips?

There was nothing that so much as suggested stiffness-it seemed rather the result of an early drill that was now second nature to her. Suddenly I recognized the hallmark-and could not imagine why I had not identified it earlier. I was sure that she had been educated by a dear old Lady Principal in a fashionable finishing school. It's a type by itself; and the stamp, once set, is

never lost.

When I have seen Miss Earnestine hold herself what we women call "below her looks," it is always plainly due to an unhappy overfatigue-a physical let-down. If she did not have to work so hard, she would always bear herself to perfection. With more leisure, or if, for instance, she should marry a man somewhat older than she, she would soon learn to lean on him, and look up to him, and then-

I wondered how much she and the Optimist are in the way of seeing of each other? There was an air of intimate understanding between them, as if he liked to talk to her, to look at her,

while she responded.

With all this passing through my mind, I was so absorbed that I started when the Optimist turned to me and said: "Well-and what do you think

of that?"

I had to admit that my thoughts had been far, far away. (And yet not so very far away either, if I had told them the truth.) Miss Earnestine leaned

over and lightly touched my hand in her pretty, not too sympathetic, way,

"You never have Daphne quite out of mind, do you?" she said. "I often think that children little know how near their mothers always are. I think"—she hesitated charmingly—"I think that kind of nearness takes care of them, too, in absence-don't you?" She spoke nicely, not sentimentally; the manner

is everything.

I felt like a hypocrite. I had forgotten all about Daphne. I couldn't possibly say so under the circumstances; and I murmured something-silly enough it sounded, too-about mothers and children. I did not dare to look at the Optimist. But when I did glance at him. I believed that I need not have troubled myself, for it seemed apparent to me that he was not thinking about me at all; so far as he was then concerned. I might just as well have said "chops and tomato sauce," and escaped criticism. He was still looking at Earnestine.

"I was telling you," he explained to me, "that Miss Earnestine is an authority on many subjects. She could give you points on finishing schools" (I knew it!), "or applied domestic science. The next time you ask me to supper, madame, if you will invite Miss Earnestine also, and ask her to broil us some English mutton-chops, I'll engage to dispose of-how many did I eat of the last broiling, Miss Earnestine?"

I hoped that I did not speak too eagerly as I named the night for Miss Earnestine to broil chops for us, and assist, with the Optimist, in their consumption. I was becoming a little better acquainted with the details of the menage of the wee apartment.

As she glanced up at me I abruptly asked: "You were educated-weren't you-at a-perhaps a rather old-fash-

ioned-finishing school?"

"How did you know?" asked Miss She looked at the Opti-"You have been telling her my stories!" she accused him.

The Optimist shook his head.

"No, I haven't-but you must. 'Rain-

bow in the heart.' That's a beauty. Tell her that one.'

"How can I-without Janet," said Miss Earnestine evasively; and then she explained to me, blushing a little, that she and the young woman physician with whom she lived amused themselves at times by acting little dramatic scenes taken from the boarding-school life which they had lived together as schoolgirls. She did not add that they sometimes had an audience for these performances-perhaps because that fact was already patent.

The Optimist chuckled.

"If I do the old Lady Principal, will you do the girls?" he asked suddenly. Earnestine blushed again-a downright blush this time-and looked doubtingly at me. Those English mutton-chop suppers in the bachelor-girls' apartment must be interesting little af-

"You've never done the old Lady Principal," said Miss Earnestine quick-

ly.
"No," said the Optimist easily. "But think how often I've seen it done. If you prefer, I'll be the girls-or I'll do both parts. 'Duty well performed makes what, young ladies?' 'Rainbow in the heart.' 'Correct!' Think of that as an ante-breakfast antiphonal!"

She knows men and women, does Miss Earnestine; and she appreciated all the revelation that this quotation was of those spirited, perhaps more or less Bohemian, little mutton-chop sup-

pers.

Embarrassed though she might be, she did not need me to come to her rescue. As she sat there, quietly smiling and refusing to be "drawn out" for my benefit, she never once quite lost that little touch of dignity, of reserve, of remoter carriage which forbade my intrusion, and proclaimed her a finished woman of the world wherever she found herself.

Yes, that's what the finishing school teaches; and there only have I seen it learned. It may, later in life, be acquired by worldly experience; but, as a science, in its concentrated form, woman-of-the-worldness is assimilated with strange swiftness and permanence only in the finishing school proper, which claims to teach-just what it teaches. If I had wanted renewed assurance that we have built as we wished to build in sending our daughter to the school of our choice, here in Miss Earnestine was the indorsement.

Only when she was a wee, wee girl had Miss Earnestine been allowed to forget that she was a "little lady." Later in her youth, that fact had been so drilled into her that she could not now forget it. Of course there are finishing schools and finishing schoolsthose that teach ideals and manners; others teaching manners only; others, again, that inculcate neither manners nor ideals.

Miss Earnestine had been educated in a school of the first grade. I was as sure of her ever-maintained dignity as if I had been present at each one of the little functions in the wee apartment.

A woman can afford to "let herself go" a little, so long as she commands this retreat of a trained convention, into which she can retire at a moment's notice. Naturally, she does not continue to retain it, or I have never seen it so retained, when she forms a habit of letting herself go too far, or too often. Delicacy, whether natural or trained, is a perishable possession.

As to the mental drill of finishing schools-I happened to know that Miss Earnestine could not multiply by twelve for the soul of her. For, in making up our last music-lesson account, I had asked her to verify the statement. In order to do so, it was necessary to multiply by twelve. That was not the way Miss Earnestine attained her result.

"I never could multiply by twelve." she said serenely. "I'll multiply this by six, and then by two. I always doit will be the same."

I am not maintaining that any finishing school ever taught a pupil thus to arrive at the multiplication of twelve; but (as a generic term) I have to admit that the mental drill there enforced is not calculated to make the mind of the pupil retain, indelibly, the multiplication table. Yet is there not in this training a delightful compensation that keeps the pupil still charming, whether she knows or does not know the product of any multiples? Serenely she multiplies by six, and then by two-and who

criticizes?

"I didn't have to be told that Miss Earnestine was educated by an oldfashioned Lady Principal," I said. "She has been taught, I can see that, exactly what I sent Daphne to boarding-school to learn. It's all very well to laugh at the old Lady Principals-Daphne's school has one-but they teach some things that a girl never loses afterward. Lady Principals enter a room—they don't just come in. They know how to use a fan and a handkerchief; and how a lady should carry herself under all circumstances. How she should sit in a chair and walk; and even how she should talk-yes, they know. It seems utterly absurd, as you watch the lessons, old-fashioned and ridiculous; but there is a grace; a something that comes with the training; an emery-wheel polish; a diamond-dust finish-you know that there is nothing that polishes a diamond like diamond-dust; that fact is perfectly beautiful, I think.'

"So do I," said the Optimist. He was looking at Miss Earnestine as he agreed. "If that's what you mean."

"I don't much care," I went on, "if Daphne doesn't learn anything else there. She's just a child still—one year without much book study won't hurt She's been growing too fast, and-

"Oh, if you've sent her to school to rest her mind, I've no more to say, said the Optimist, "I misunderstood the case. I'll open the door for you, Miss Earnestine, if you must go."

"You won't forget the mutton-chop supper engagement, Miss Earnestine?" I said. It seemed to me that I couldn't remember when I had grown so quickly to like a girl so well. I wanted to see more of her-much more of her.

"I'll see that she remembers," said the

Optimist.

I could hear them in the hallway, still talking and laughing together at the front door. One might think that the Optimist wore a kimono, because he can keep more information concealed up his sleeve than any one I ever met. He never had mentioned Miss Earnes-

tine's name to me.

"That's just the kind of woman I like." I said to the Optimist when he came back into the room. "She is a fascinating type; so gay, so divertingand so hard-working, too; not to say so overworked. She is dainty, too; did you notice her gown, her hair-everything? I don't see how she retains daintiness, busy as she is. She's what I told you-the finishing-school type. The finish is hard to lose. I can't imagine anything which I would enjoy more, if I were only in a position to do it, than to give that girl the kind of life and the kind of time that she's so suited for. It wouldn't spoil her, either-not a bit. See how she's kept the best of her lost prosperity in her poverty—she'd do just the same the other way round."

"Yes," said the Optimist, "she would. She's fine—gallant. I've known her ever since their reverses, and I've seen a great deal of her of late. I'm taking singing-lessons of her now. If I had to choose a good comrade, nice and true

and square, from head to foot, and jolly as the day is long, I'd say—Miss Earnestine. She's always just as you see her. She's a good fellow—the best I know." Then he took up his neglected paper and suddenly retired behind it, leaving me to my cogitations.

A good fellow!

That's not the way a man talks of the woman he's thinking of as—as something quite different. I was too disappointed to do or say anything. I merely sat and sewed. Suddenly a queer little sound made me look up to see the Optimist's paper shaking as if an earthquake were under it.

"What is the matter?" I asked. At which the Optimist dropped his paper and disclosed a face distorted by suppressed laughter. He looked at me in

silence. He could not speak.

"What is it?" I repeated, but rather weakly. I was not unprepared for the reply, when the Optimist, openly rocking in his chair, wiped the tears from his eyes and gasped out: "I—I was only thinking, dear Subrikinque, how hard—how full of disappointments, of withered hopes must be—the—the career of a"—he choked again—"a born Subrikinque."



THE GIFTS

CAME the New Year—a guest within my door— And in his hand (I could not choose but see) Were gifts thrice-sealed—he showed not what he bore— For mine and me.

Eager as children are to take their due,
We clustered round him, and he said: "Behold,
In one hand lies Unrest; in one, sealed, too,
Lies Peace like gold."

"Nay, give us Peace," all softly we besought. But "Choose," he answered, "whichsoe'er ye please." Then I remembered that the Old Year brought Gifts such as these.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

IN SNOW AND CANDLE LIGHT





shimmered like a crystal that night. All the tints of the spectrum were in the still, icy air as my sleigh sped homeward in the long sunset along the

Nevsky Prospekt. At this time I had been married only a few months. Robert was a New York war correspondent, sent by a newspaper syndicate to Russia to report the revolutionary troubles that were throwing the czar and his family into the agonies of mortal fear. I shall not touch on the political situation at all. Like the average woman, I understood it superficially; just enough to talk about it with Robert with an air of helpless questioning which gave him the opportunity which all men like—to

be all-wise and informing. He had gone to Tikhvin, not far from St. Petersburg, a week before. A fanatical massacre had occurred there, and Robert was to supply his papers with the dark details—a secret mission, of course, because Russia's intolerance makes it the home of subterfuge and pretense. The week had been a long one for me. Russians are hospitable, but the land is mysterious. There the stranger feels indeed an alien. monotonous snow chills while it fascinates; the signs in the Slavic tongue. over the shop doors, are as outré, despite their French translations, as so much Chinese; no one goes on foot there but the poor, for the snow is so deep that the big boots one has to wear are so clumsy that they leave traces like elephants' feet; their religion shuts you out from worship, although you see many blue-and-gold Muscovite belfries, with priests attired and veiled, and the people making the ground-reverence before the shrines on the streets. But you understand nothing; and no one cares a pin that you don't. Oh, how often I have ached with a whimsical nostalgia for a sight of New York's skyscrapers, their summits coiffed by a humid veil; how I have yearned for even the nervous, angry-browed conductors on the street-cars, with their

belligerent, "Step lively."

We had a delightful apartment not far from the admiralty; and my sledge left me at the door as the gas was being lighted around the phantasmal squares. I hoped to find a letter from Robert, saving he would be back on the morrow. Instead, I found better news; I was to see him within a few hours. He wrote me that he would leave Tikhvin on the first evening train possible. But instead of coming straight on to me, he would have to stop at Baron Orloff's, just seven miles out of St. Petersburg. This man was to give Robert some important political information at dinner. I was to meet Robert there, see what the country home of a Russian nobleman was like. and enjoy the welcome of one whom Robert called "a strange being-an aristocrat, but whose heart bleeds for the mujiks." I was charged to wear my prettiest dinner frock, and to reach Baron Orloff's by eight. Robert would arrive as nearly at that hour as possible; and we were to return by sleighs in the moonlight. The rest of the letter was full of the sort of things that lovers delight in, and other people think silly. I folded the sheet, and kept it against my heart.

As Sparrow brushed my hair I could hardly sit still for joy. Sparrow was my American maid, and Sparrow was her family name. Sometimes it sounded absurd calling: "Sparrow, fetch me my tea, please." But I had no choice, for her Christian name, given her by a grim, Presbyterian mother, was Judgment. If Robert had not put in that line about sleighing back in the moonlight, it is possible I'd have taken Sparrow with me to Baron Orloff's. Had I done so, I might not have had this story to tell.

When I was ready, I felt sure Robert would like me. My gown was a net of flashing steel beads, which fell away from the shoulders and twisted in a serpentlike way about the feet. I wore beautiful diamonds; and a big gardenia, that had cost a pretty penny, pressed its deathly white petals against my bosom. I am a pale blonde, and gowned in this way, I knew that there was something moonlighty and frostlike about me.

As my light sledge on flashing runners carried me through the white squares of the city, the strange, ghostly fascination of the north crept over me, and I was a happy creature. In that still, blue, icy air even death did not mean decay; the gilded belfries of St. Isaac's, with the spangle in the dome reflecting the moon, seemed an enchanted edifice to a strange god; the world seemed to have spread a carpet of unspotted ermine for fairies to dance on in the green light. The same mood lasted as we left the city. On every side diamonded roads sparkled, with only an occasional mujik's darting sledge making shadows like bats wings on the whiteness.

I came out of my waking dream when the isvochtchik, as the sledge-driver is called, drew up with tinkling chains at a gateway with spars of crystallized snow. The gates stood slightly ajar, and it was necessary for the isvochtchik to get down and push them back, for the usual dvornik—a sort of porter in a coat of sheepskin worn wrong side out—was not to be seen. As the sledge went chiming up to the house, which stood on a rise of ground,

I was impressed by the brilliancy of its lighting; and, after a pause, by the solemn, supreme quiet hanging over it. It might have been an illuminated mausoleum. This illumination was an unusual thing in Russia, because the double windows, sealed in winter, are covered at night by heavy curtains of velvet or wool. These draperies must have all been pushed aside. Each casement, with only a thin but opaque covering of pale silk, was a square of yellow light.

The horses champed and neighed, tossing their metal chains. The *isvocht-chik* called loudly. But no footstep was heard, no shadow crossed the flaming windows.

"I will go to the door, isvochtchik," I said to the driver in a labored mixture of Russian and French, as I unbuttoned the fur rugs that had been banked upon me. "Wait—I will knock."

To my knocking and calling the door remained shut. The isvochtchik cursed in his beard, which had become a triangle of icicles. The sweat congealed on the horses till they seemed frosted; shorn of my rugs I was icy cold. My fur pelisse was already covered with tiny, frost globules; my veil was frozen stiff where the air congealed my breath upon it.

"Are you sure this is Baron Orloff's?" I cried frantically to the man.

"Da vot," he said, nodding his head in its high, scarlet velvet cap. "So the mujik on the bridge told me."

As he finished speaking, the sound of footsteps crunching the snow came to us. They were unhurried, as regular as a soldier's marching step; and from the side of the house an imposing figure stepped into the moonlight. This was a man; and the vivid brightness showed that he was wrapped in a magnificent paletot of sable and Siberian blue fox. The collar rose up so high and the cap came down so low that only his nose looked out between the furry masks.

"Ach, the barin!" cried the isvochtchik; and as I recognized the word to mean "master," I realized that the own-

er of the house was before me.

He mounted the steps in the same slow, measured way, and uncovered his head. The porch was in shadow. I saw faintly a pair of very dark eyes, a pale, thin face, and close-cut, white

"Pardon, madame. Had I known it was you who knocked--" he began.

"But you expected me," I broke in nervously, tearing off my veil. "My husband told me to meet him here. I am Mrs. Robert Trecartin," I explained in French.

Knowing how accomplished in languages the upper classes in Russia are, I was not surprised to hear him reply in English as perfect as my own, except for an overcareful division of each word:

"I had not expected you so soon. I hope you have not been knocking long. This welcome seems inhospitable. is a feast day, and every servant on the place is drunk. They are simply sodden with vodka. I shall have to make myself very useful. Pray walk in by the fire. I will show the isvocht-

chik the way to the stable.'

He unlocked the door, and I ran in. shivering, to the roaring wood fire. It was in a most interesting place-a spacious, oblong hall; high-ceiled and richly tinted; furnished like a luxurious room with fine pieces of old oak and mahogany. The characteristic Russian notes gave it the charm of the foreign; on a rack near the door a line of pelisses hung. A row of goloshes that showed beneath gave a lifelike suggestion of human figures, reminding one of our childish idea of Bluebeard's wives strung on a line. There was the blue-and-gold shrine to the Byzantine Madonna in a niche in the paneling, with the flame that is never quenched flickering before it; the profusion of flowers was everywhere, by which the wealthy Russian tries to cheat himself into the belief that it is spring, and the long winter is over. The tall candles flamed like stars. I had grown used to the extravagance of Russian candlelighting; but this scene was of disturbing brilliance. How many candles! There were masses of them in high silver candlesticks; the rooms off the hall blazed in the same way; and from the illuminated façade as I had seen it on the driveway, I felt that every nook in the house was lighted as if for a festi-

Baron Orloff entered. I was standing by the fire. My hood was off, and I had partially unfastened my pelisse. I turned, meaning to speak lightly and cheerfully to him. But I could not. I remained dumb, looking at him. A cold thrill ran through me. My sensation was not fear, yet it had some likeness to it. He stood in the glitter of the candles; and I thought I had never seen a stranger face, nor one more pathetically beautiful. His finely cut features were emaciated; his dark eyes were wild and mournful; his flesh was of a deathly tint, and drawn tightly over the cheek-bones, with violet stains about the lids. But, despite all this, and his white hair, he was still Tragedy and illness, but not young. age, were in the face. He was markedly eccentric, too; for, as in a weary way he took off the superb fur paletot and hung it up, I saw that he was not dressed for dinner. Instead, his clothes were wrinkled, and in places even stained; his collar and loose tie were rumpled. Evidently, Baron Orloff despised custom. Probably a nobleman of radical views would feel inclined to do so.

"I have been away a long time," he said gently; "I have been making the isvochtchik comfortable. Will you go to a room above and lay aside your cloak and heavy boots? It is a pity that there is no servant fit to wait upon

you.'

"I'll throw my things off here," I said. "This fire is too beautiful to

I spoke almost gaily, because I felt ill at ease. Baron Orloff disturbed me. There was a continual fluttering restlessness about him. Either his fingers twitched, or his brows, his lips, his eyelids. His staring eyes, lighting his face so vividly, had a continual question in them, giving a suggestion of a gaping mouth. It was foolish to feel a shrinking from him. He was odd—a recluse, probably; and evidently some frightful happening in the past had marked him for all time; but he was a friend of Robert, who had thought him worth my knowing. I knew that I should feel differently when Robert came; and I began to listen for some sound from the shut-out world heralding his arrival.

Baron Orloff placed my cloak and boots on a settle in a corner, and came slowly back to me.

"I can't thank you sufficiently, baron," I said, while gazing into the fire, "for your invitation. This is the first country house that I've visited in Russia."

He did not answer; and, when I looked up quickly, I found him gazing at me with profound sorrow and pity.

"What is your name?" he asked.
"Elinor," I said obediently, awed by his expression.

"How old are you?"

Instead of showing my surprise at the unusual question, I answered him as a child would have done.

"I am just twenty-five. I'll have a birthday next week."

"Next week," he echoed, making a helpless gesture with widespread hands. "Ah, if your birthday had been just past, instead of coming, I should be better pleased." I started up, but he continued quickly, a touch of fire in his melancholy gaze: "You are one of those gold and white and turquoise-tinted women who could stand for a symbol of Russia. You seem clad in moonlight. You seem made of ice. Oh, you are very beautiful—but your heart? Is that like Russia's—a dead, black awful thing—strapped with brass and oozing poison?"

"Baron Orloff——" I stammered, retreating, while the heart he had spoken of so suspiciously was quivering weakly, and seeming to beat in my throat as well as in my side. "You certainly are a very original person;" and I laughed feebly.

"You don't know what sort of a heart you have?" he persisted.

"I'm sure it's not like your descrip-

tion. But, then," I said lightly, "I've never seen it."

"No one could see it unless you were dead," he said, in a slow, dreamlike voice.

I had never wished for anything in my life as I wished for Robert's coming. He should have reached the house by that time. Baron Orloff no doubt was a great soul, but his originality was too uncanny for a fanciful woman to enjoy in a lonely country house, in a strange land, with all the servants drunk.

"Won't you sit down?" I faltered, trying to speak in the politely interested tone of convention. "Let us talk of—Russia. My husband tells me that you have liberal views, baron. You—you—sympathize with the movement to help the mujiks—don't you?" and I listened for some sound at the door.

He did sit down in a big oak settle opposite me; but he sat stiffly, his hands grasping his knees, his lips twitching, his melancholy eyes wandering over me with a strange, consuming look.

"I am sorry for them," he said thoughtfully; and added with a surprising vigor: "They ought all to die."

"You see no future?" I rushed on, feeling vaguely that a silence between us might breed something ominous, although I had no clear idea of what I stood in awe.

"I am sorry for every one," he said. "Every one would be better dead." The pulse of fear that had throbbed at the first clear sight of him began to beat hard. "Did your husband not tell you this?" he asked impatiently. "Did he not tell you that I believe the world is to be redeemed by death? If some amazing, universal holocaust were to come crashing upon this puny globe so that no living thing moved upon it, no spear of grass were left; if only the vast oceans sighed around its nothingness; then from this nullity new pulsations would come, life would recommence. A new race made of the flashing essences of pure air, untainted by human breath, and of electric waves rising from the cleansed earth, would begin

to appear." His eyes narrowed; the most intense longing shook his tones. "Oh, I can see the shining eyes and godlike smiles of those strangers, with no likeness to mortals as they are now. They would never know the meaning of self. Their first instinct would be to save others. Their aim would be not to live, but to die-to die beautifully; to return like a mist to the sunshot ether where they were created."

I tried to speak as he paused. It was useless. I sat crouched in my chair, very cold, my rigid hands clutching each other. "Yes, there is nothing as beautiful as death," he concluded,

as he smiled and rose.

I faltered to my feet, too, trembling. I faced him. I felt an instinct not to lose sight of him, to watch his every

movement.

"I will play for you," he said, resuming his sorrowful tone. "I will get my violin, and you shall hear the requiem I composed myself. There is no laughter in the world as joyous as my requiem. I played it over my wife

as she lay dead.

He went up the curving stairs, I watching him. When I was alone I did not cheat myself-I was mortally afraid of Baron Orloff. There was something undecipherable. alarming about him. I could only marvel that Robert should have urged my visit to such a man without my husband's protection. My instinct was to rush into the numbing cold and wait there for Robert, for whose presence every darting nerve and rapid heart-beat were now clamoring. But I was afraid to seem afraid to the strange being who offered me such singular entertainment. While he was gone, however, I looked about the place. My host had said nothing of dinner. He did not seem disturbed by Robert's delay, although it must be past nine. I knew that, owing to the servants' condition, no preparations for the meal were under way. But I could see the table in readiness in one of the rooms off the hall. Lighted candles were on it; and small, silver vases holding flowers were set at each of the three places. This sight gave substance to the present experience. At any rate, I was not dreaming. I was here to meet my husband, and to dine. We were

expected guests.

I tried to reason myself into calmness, and had partially succeeded, when I caught sight of my face in a mirror inset in one of the panels that I passed. It looked old, blanched—it was like the face of a distraught stranger, Again the desire to leave the place gripped me, and I felt that I must obey, no matter how absurd I might seem later, after Robert had come. I had slipped on my pelisse, and was about to thrust one foot into a fur boot when the baron came back.

"You are going out?" he asked, frowning, laying the violin he carried

on a table.

"I feel a little faint, and the cold

"Nonsense. The mercury has dropped-it must be thirty degrees be-

"I think I'd like to go out near the gates." The words were so rapid they struck against each other into foolishsounding murmuring.

"Most unwise."
"But I must have my way." masked my seriousness with a smile. "Just a moment or two in the cold air

will be delightful."

"You are not going." His voice was gentle, but he came to me, laid hands that seemed of steel on my shoulders, and literally tore the garment from "Now," he continued, in the same soft yet indescribably terrifying tones, "you shall sit by the fire and listen to He pushed me backward into a chair in the same controlled, masterful way. I was as helpless under the dominion of his eyes and touch as a leaf in a gale; and I sat there, a faint, sick feeling creeping over me as he said: "The happiest things in the world are in my music-you shall hear !- the flutter of butterflies, the song of brooks, the glory of spring mornings and of rose gardens, the call of the laughing seas, of love without sorrow and birth without pain-ah, you shall hear! you shall hear!" he muttered more wildly,

and as his thin cheeks wrinkled in a smile, it was like seeing happiness blaze for a moment in a dead face.

He took his stand by one of the high, clustered candlesticks, and began to play. I had only a confused idea of volumes of triumphant music—furious and soft by turns. My terror increased as I sat listening—listening for Robert's

coming.

Perhaps he was on his way—perhaps he was at that moment being driven to the doors—the music was drowning the sound of the sledge-chains—he must be near—he must be near. So my thoughts raced; but the music, after a wild, eagle sweep upward, pulsated, then shivered slowly into silence; and no welcome sound broke the oppressive calm that followed. I was still alone with Baron Orloff in that strange, yast, candle-lighted hall.

He laid the violin down and sank into a chair, throwing his head back, exhausted. I did not speak; and he seemed to have forgotten me. Moments passed during which my desire to escape, and a recognition of the futility of the desire, waged like com-

batants in my consciousness.

I kept gazing at the door. Through that entrance Robert must come. Oh, he would bring a feeling of safety; he would bring joy keener than any I had ever known. Perhaps I had been growing morbidly fanciful; and with Robert beside me, this white-faced man would seem only piquantly original; not menacing, like a creature out of a fearful dream. I looked at him timidly. His wide-open eyes were fixed on the ceiling. After what seemed a long time, he began to speak to me, yet without looking at me.

"It is right that you should see a man's soul. You shall see a man's soul. You shall see mine. You have laughed too much. You have been too happy. I shall tell you about my wife." He turned, frowning, words leaping like a torrent from his lips. "She was as fair as you are—the same sort of a woman—the white-and-gold sort, who are children always, and laugh so easily. She laughed when she awoke in the morn-

ing, and saw the sunlight. She loved iust being alive." He paused, and said furiously: "That was wrong! Life is thrust upon us! We tolerate it. But we must not rejoice in it!" He began pacing up and down before me, his hands and lips twitching. "I took her traveling. She had the most expensive tastes. I gratified them. Why not? I loved her. I was rich. One day, in Paris, I learned I was poor. I had lost my fortune in one of those financial crashes that cause as much death as cholera. I did not tell my wife. She was too happy. She loved me-rich. Poor, she might not have loved me. Women are like that-she was like that-and, oh, I loved her! I became a gambler. To our home in Paris, the richest, the silliest, the most degraded of France's miserable aristocracy came. I played and won. After awhile I played and lost. I kept on losing. When I saw beggary before me I began to cheat. I cheated successfully for four months. One night as my wife sat watching me at play I met her eves. She had found me out. That look was her doom. I did not act suddenly, however. I gave much thought to it. Eventually, the sentence against her read this way: 'No one who knows I am a thief shall live—and death is the crown of life.' It was after this, while I saw her detestation of me growing daily, and while my heart was breaking, that I wrote the requiem. I put her laughter into the music and all the things that she loved. I did not act in haste, you see. I was very calm. I had never loved her so much as then. When the requiem was finished I killed her."

I had often read that in moments of extremest peril one's brain stays quiet and clear. People saved miraculously from the shipwreck and other violent deaths have said so. I knew then that it is true. For, during the baron's speech, my mind perceived my desperate case. I realized that while he must have hidden his affliction from Robert, Baron Orloff, probably from brooding over the wrongs of Russia's poor, had become a fanatic, whose cult was mur-

der. My senses sprang to my relief like so many sentinels. I looked back at him, recognized the deadly intent peeping from his eyes, and I knew I was about to fight for my life. He meant to kill me with as little understanding of the atrocity as a cruel boy has who, whistling, dismembers a fly. To keep my head, to interest him enough to delay him, to surprise him—this was all I could do.

I lifted my head defiantly, feeling sure that he had not expected this action. I actually laughed. Laughter more desolate never passed human lips. "And now, baron," I said, "now that

you have told me of your dishonor?"

"No one shall live who knows of it."
"But wait," I said rapidly; and my laughter, continuing, confused him, I could see; "I don't know it. You tell me so—but I did not see you. If you went into a court of law your confession would not be believed without proof."

While I was speaking, two women really stood in that lonely hall—one laughing wildly with pallid face; one praying desperately to God for life—

for life!

"Do you mean I would lie to you?"

he asked, with anger.

"Ah, baron, that is a harsh word. But thinking me afraid of death, as so many are, but as I—I am not, you might enjoy interesting me by a tale, that you would tell me afterward, was but a bit of fiction, a contrast to the gay, exhilarating requiem. Surely you see? Don't you see?" I asked rapidly; and "Robert! Robert! Robert!" I was calling silently in anguish.

His brain seemed fumbling with my words; his fingers fluttered as he clasped and unclasped them in a flabby way. My eyes did not waver from his murder-obsessed eyes for the fraction of a second. I was not going to be taken at a disadvantage. I did not want to give him time for clearer thought. But his next words shook the very roots

of my courage.

"Are you afraid to die?"

"No-no-no," I said faintly, and rushed on: "Let me tell you why. You

seem to think me happy, clinging to life, loving laughter. Ah, baron, I am a cheat. You told me your story—hear mine—hear mine! Yes—listen. What if my heart is sad? Then I put on my most beautiful gown, and go into the world without a trace of care on my face. Does sorrow shadow me? I laugh. Do disappointments come? I set my teeth; I sing, and keep on—keep on! Oh, baron—don't you see—don't you—"

I could not go on. His gaze left mine, and fastened itself upon something among the books and flowers on the table. I looked, too, and saw a cloisonné scabbard, with a delicate Japanese blade beside it. It was beautiful enough to be a toy; and up to this time had probably lain there as a curio or served as a paper-cutter; but the shimmering blue line at its edge showed its deadly fitness as a weapon.

I could feel the flesh on my face dragged and stiff. I had reached the limit of terror. With a despair that rolled over me in waves, I renounced the hope of Robert's coming in time. On the next few moments the issues of my life spun. I saw this crisis in Baron Orloff's face. I seemed looking into my own grave.

As he lifted the blade, I saw him turn his head for a few seconds toward one of the closed doors at the end of the hall. He was listening, too. There was not a sound. But from that turning of the head another faint hope began to crawl, like a half-dead thing, through me. It came back to me that I had noticed this action before, as if he listened for something—feared something from behind that particular door. These pauses had been almost imperceptible; but as straws acquire importance to the drowning man, I remembered this apprehensive gesture now.

He came toward me, broken sentences tinctured with worship and a grim epicureanism leaving his lips in

whispers:

"To feel the ebbing of the life tide
. . . to feel the coming of the great
peace . . . to be lifted to the stars
. . . to see the face of God

to have life's terrible 'Why-why?' answered-"

"Hush—listen!" I broke in, bending forward and gazing at the door back of the hall. I saw him straighten, craft and expectancy in his look. "Don't you hear?" I cried. "Oh, what a strange sound—there—there!"

He dropped the knife. As he did so, I really heard a sound; one that sent the blood to my brain. It might be only a stranger passing; but the chiming of distant sledge-chains came to me

distant sledge-chains came to me. Baron Orloff must not hear the approach of a rescuer. I drowned it in a cry that I could see frightened him.
"Baron—in that room—what is it?

Don't you hear? Oh, I am afraid—I am afraid—don't you hear?—don't you hear?

He left my side with despatch. Indeed, he fairly sprang into the adjoining room; and the door flapped behind him. I ran with all the speed of the terrified down the long hall. And now there came to me clearly the castanet-like sweetness of the sledge-chains and the sound of horses stopping. But before I could reach the door I heard Baron Orloff rush back to the deserted room; and his voice, risen to a screech, flung the word: "Stop!" after me. In weakness I fell against the fastenings, and tore the door back. Robert was

"The train shot off the track into a drift—I had the hardest work getting a sleigh——" he began, but broke off in a panic: "Elinor, my darling!"

just bounding up the steps.

I had flung myself into his arms, heaving hard breaths that hurt me. I clung to him while pointing backward into the hall, where Baron Orloff stood with defiant face—a wild animal trapped. I tried to tell Robert that he had meant to kill me, to warn him to protect us both, when the final, hobgoblin touch to that night of fear was given by Robert staring over my shoulder and whispering:

"What man is that, Elinor?"

With the words a blank curtain came down upon my consciousness. When I recovered, more than an hour later, I was lying on a rug-covered couch, my

face wet, brandy burning my lips. Robert knelt beside me; my hands-were in his; and with a return of fright I clutched them hard, as I looked about. The place presented a scene of disorder and excitement that was in forcible contrast to my-memory of the place when I trembled in its stillness for fear of death. The man I had known as Baron Orloff was strapped in a chair; three men in a livery of long gray coats with fur capes were busied about him. He was lying as if spent from running; his mouth fallen in weakness. Two haggard servants, one of them limping painfully, were hurrying about at the direction of a man, evidently a doctor, who was bending over an object on the rug before the fire. When the doctor rose, I saw that his patient was an old, distinguished-looking man. He was unconscious: his shirt had been torn open over the shoulder, and bandages wrapped it; on a chair near him his evening coat hung, brilliant with stars and crosses.

"Close your eyes—rest," I heard Robert whispering. "Don't ask me anything now. You're safe, dear—and I've been thanking God with every breath. You're safe—but it was a narrow escape."

"But tell me-" I began,

"Not now. Keep very calm. I won't answer a single question. Instead, I'll bundle you up and take you back to town at once."

But I couldn't be satisfied with that —what woman could?

"Just tell me this, dear——" I pointed to the figure by the fire. "That's Baron Orloff?"

"Yes-poor old chap."

"Is he dead?"

"No."

"And the other—who was the other, Robert?"

"Are you asking one question or twenty? Try to stand now, like a good girl, and slip into this;" and he held up my pelisse.

He did not let me speak during the drive back. I lay against his heart under the robes, stupefied and thankful. When I saw, at last, the glittering

needle of the admiralty, and knew that home was near, all I had suffered and feared sent me into shuddering weeping. Later, when I was calm, and Sparrow had given me my steaming chocolate by the fire, Robert told me

the story.

The man who had posed as Baron Orloff was one of four lunatics who had broken from a maison de santé about two miles away. He was Cyril Mokevef, a nephew of the baron's, and a protégé also. He had been insane for years. One of the keepers of the asylum who had come in search of him. not long after Robert's arrival, had given a brief review of his history: He was a musical genius. Baron Orloff had paid for his musical education; and he had been for years, before his affliction, first violin at the opera-house. He had married a very beautiful girl. daughter of a Moscow editor, who was a secret nihilist. She became inoculated with her father's beliefs, and converted her husband to them. They were among the strugglers for Russia's liberty from its many phases of bondage. After a few years, certain acts of treason were attributed to the woman. She was arrested, and put in prison in St. Petersburg to await trial. "To await trial" is a phrase in Russia to make angels weep. She had waited for almost a year, and, waiting, had died there of smallpox. After a long period of melancholy, her husband's grief changed to dementia, then to madness; and he was put under restraint. the cunning of the mad, he often seemed almost sane, merely eccentric: and at such times would dwell always on his wife's death; never telling the sodden, dark reality, but the most fanciful stories, a coinage of mad imaginings. His mania was always for universal death—the outcome of his belief that since she, the flower of the world, was gone, death was the guerdon of all

Baron Orloff had been in readiness to receive us at dinner, and had fallen into a doze while reading. The madman, familiar with the place, had no difficulty in entering; had bound the baron and hidden him in the library. After wounding him into insensibility, he had attacked the four house-servants. Recognizing him as the insane nephew, their terror had made them helpless. One was dead. My poor isvochtchik had been found strangled in the snow. One servant who had escaped had brought back the asylum attendants.

Robert and I were very quiet, very solemn when the story was finished. Suddenly he knelt down and put his

arms quite about me.

"Oh, when I think what the ending might have been—dearest; when I think—!" he said, trembling. "It was the lunatic who lighted the house in that festive way, and—I did not tell you before—he had everything arranged for burning it to the ground when your arrival made him follow a new whim for the moment. But you weren't to be taken from me in that cruel way, Elinor. No, thank God; no."

I took Robert's face in both my hands; and we looked long into each

other's eves.

"Think how she was taken from him—smallpox in a Russian prison! Oh, how I pity him—poor, stricken man!" The tears crept down my face. "This Russia frightens me. I'm glad we're American, dear; aren't you?"

"Of course," said Robert emphaticaly. "Everybody would be Americans

if they could."



YESTERDAY'S RECKONING







Jane W Guthrie.



/ENING was dropping down upon Riverside Park, and the foreboding of coming night was pictured in the sunset shadows under the trees. Lonely motor-cars flashing along the

driveway and the occasional clap of horses' hoofs up toward Claremont Inn replaced the languid and spiritless efforts of the summer afternoon parade, and announced the dinner hour to the wayfarers upon the benches and the strollers along the by-paths. Now and then, a belated straggler, turning his back upon the stateliest vision that New York presents, went his way, moved by the compelling impulse of the hour.

Others, however, still sat or stood about, evidently enjoying the perfume of the evening and immunity from the clashing sound of the great city which lay glittering, panting, vibrating, toward the south. One, a woman in a soft white gown, sat alone, gazing with inscrutable, introspective eyes out into the gathering shadows that were blurring into indefiniteness the bold battlements of the Palisades on the opposite shores of the Hudson, and painting with uncertain gray clouds the orange tints of the western sky.

She was small and slight; perhaps a bit colorless to the ordinary observer; and about thirty years of age. But the short, upper lip, the shadowy gray eyes, veiled by dark brows and lashes, and the youthful glow of the lovely brown hair from which she had lifted her hat.

carried the hint of temperament, a distinctive individuality; and the ungloved hands lying tightly clasped in her lap bore the indubitable marks of refinement. Sitting there alone, relaxed but alert, she seemed to be an expression of the great city where one may be always isolated but never solitary.

Suddenly, conscious of another presence, she turned and faced, with a disturbed, questioning gaze, a man who stood at the back of the bench looking down at her. He had just stepped from a motor-car, which he had left at the side of the roadway.

He was as individually noticeable as the woman. Tall and loosely built, there was an easy swing to his figure. His open manner was the antithesis of the woman's careful reserve. His eyes were kindly ones that loved laughter, but they were contradicted by the traces of a quick temper and a jaw unconquerably tenacious.

There was the look of the world in his face; not merely the surface cosmopolitanism of the average New Yorker, but the more convincing sophistication of a man who, possessing the conditions of wealth without having won them for himself, has read, traveled, and lived in many languages, among many scenes, and in every phase.

"I stopped for you, Jean," he said; "but they told me at the house that you were up here for a breath of air. Come"—coaxingly—"come drive with me, and then we will have dinner together somewhere."

"No," she replied; and there was, to

the man, a provocative note of allurement in her denial. "No, I am tired. I want to stay here and rest. The peace of this"-looking outward-"is too satisfying to resist.

'Then I am going to sit down with you," he announced, as he came around

to her side.

The woman did not reply; and if her manner were unresponsive, the flame in her eyes and a slight flush that crept up into her cheeks indicated that she was not wholly unmoved. Then the color died, and the face became an impassive mask concealing impulse and emotion.

"I have come back, Jean," he said definitely: "and this time"-obstinately

"I am going to stay."

She did not answer, and the man, scrutinizing her carefully, impatiently

threw out his hands.

"God!" cried Tilghman. "When I think of the years that you have taken out of my life!"

"I?"—surprised—"I?" She started up indignantly, he thought to leave.

He caught her hands. "Sit down, Jean," he insisted. "I am not going to make a fool of myself. It's good enough to be near you. May I smoke?"

Assuming her right to moods, he left the situation after that in her hands, while he followed with his eyes, as a sedative to his nerves, the blue rings that floated out from his cigar; he was keenly aware, however, of the almost mutinous attitude of the woman beside him, who was watching the dying gleams of day upon the river. Finally she spoke meditatively:

"What a feminine thing that river

is." Her voice was a bit weary.

"If it expresses useless effort and uncalled for force, it certainly is feminine," he replied stiffly.

She raised her eyebrows suggestively, half-inquiringly, as if she might question the significance of his remark, and, then disregarding it, she added:

"I love the Hudson! Think of it! When it starts out up there in the hidden springs of the Adirondacks, it is free; or, rather, it seems to be. Little by little, it adds to itself, drawing beauty and individuality, and force and charm from its environment. Such an exquisitely gay, and lively, and unrestrained little stream as it is, wandering off into small, excursive journeys among meadows only to travel back to its main course again. And then-it comes in contact with the influences of humanity, the larger affairs. It loses all of its native charm, and assumes an entirely different character. forced to do duty; its very beauty is turned to account, and instead of roaming as it pleases, when the moods of spring and flood-time take it, it is restrained by the masculine strength of

those hills up there.

"The river frets its boundaries a little, not much. It tries to hurt them by carrying some of them away in its rush. but the damage is slight, and the hills are virtually unharmed. By the time the wild stream gets down here-Look! It is bearing all sorts of burdens; troubled with the refuse of a city; performing all the tasks that man chooses to put it to; and when it has reached that"-pointing to the far, faint line of the Highlands-"it has not vet found its lost freedom, its dreams of freedom, perhaps its hopes of freedom, like that wild flare up in the mountains of its youth. It is absorbed into the ocean. Its individuality, its freshness, its very identity is obliterated. Yes, it is all a woman."

"At least the river has life," said the man sententiously; "with both the curse and the glory of humanity. Why don't you think what it has brought to the ocean! It seems to me that to have carried the sweetness and the trace of a happy youth to the weary old ocean waiting for it is destiny enough."

"But its lost freedom!" whispered

"Is not a woman free, then?" asked Tilghman, with a touch of bitterness in his voice. "Free to choose, and to mold, and to form her own life, and thereby to make or mar that of others?"

"Some women are free to do as they please, but they have to struggle to accomplish their freedom; and, after they have won it, it does not seem worth while. As a rule, a woman has to follow her life on lines laid down for her or come to grief. She is 'the slave of circumstance and the fool of fate.' No -there are only two things in creation which are really free-air and man; and, considering wind as air in motion, they are each free to create any kind of havoc that impulse dictates.'

"May I ask, Jean, have you come to grief?" asked Tilghman curiously,

hesitatingly.

"That depends on how you look at it," she answered quietly. "I suppose most women would say that I have. Actually, I suppose I have not. I have lived, and loved, and felt, and dreamed, and lost; and I fancy that I have had life in full measure—what most of us ask."

"Well, if that is life in full measure, I am sure that I've had it." he said, with somber sarcasm, as he rose, paced to and fro for a moment or two, and then sat down again, smoking with quick energy. He turned to the woman be-

side him.

"I am sure, you would say that it is all the fault of my vile temper and my undisciplined disposition that I have never cared in all these years to come back and take up again the threads of my life that you once broke; but I don't mind telling you-if it's any satisfaction to you-that there has never been a day in all the time when I have not lived every one of them fighting the thought of you, hating you, longing for you, and-loving you." His teeth set hard together for a second. wished, in these last two days"-he added passionately-"that I had never laid eyes on you again."

He tossed his cigar away with some vehemence; kicked two or three pebbles with unnecessary force, and, putting his arm along the back of the bench, he looked at her with a compelling gaze that almost frightened her. It sent the blood flaming up into her cheeks, but her eyes were quiet and serene, and her voice well modulated as she turned to

him and said:

"Any one who has made a vital impress upon another's life, and has taken from it something of value, or destroyed the beauty of a hope or belief, is bound by that wonderful law of retribution to suffer for it, to lose something of like value. You threw away not only the best thing that life can offer a mana woman's love and a woman's youthbut, if I had let you, you might have

spoiled my life,"

"I confess that I never looked at it in that light," said Tilghman grimly; "it always seemed to me the other way; but you must acknowledge that I was severely tried. I have always wondered at your ardent championship of Tarvington. I have always felt that he, at least, owed me an explanation; and" forcefully-"I have always considered him a sneak."

Jean straightened suddenly, and re-

plied with more animation:

"There is not the faintest trace of sneak in Frederic Tarvington. He is the best man I ever knew.'

Tilghman turned about eagerly, jeal-

"What do you know, and how do you know anything of him?"

She did not reply for a moment or

two, and then she answered:

"I have been Frederic Tarvington's private secretary and woman of business: his confidential servant-adviser -whatever you choose to call it, for the last eight years." And her slight but comprehensive gesture said plainly: "If that is not knowing a man, I don't know what is."

The quick and furious temper flamed up in Tilghman's face. He got up and stood, and then sat down again beside her, his eyes searching her, asking her, demanding of her the explanation of

her words.

"You!" he cried explosively. "You in Frederic Tarvington's employ! can't believe it." His eyes were scanning afresh the dainty apparel, the carefully kept hands, the fine personal charm of the woman. "How did it happen?"

Her eyes lingered upon the darkening lines in the west with a retrospective gleam in them, as she replied slow-

ly and with broken pauses:

"You knew, long ago, when we were young, that I loved you. I don't see, I never have seen, how you could have doubted that; and yet for a piece of iealous bad temper you chose to say to me and do to me things that no woman's pride should allow her to forgive." She smiled reminiscently as she added: "I am afraid that my pride was a poor thing in those days. If you had happened to be there at the right moment, and had not bullied me as you did, I think I might have betrayed another man's confidence, begged you to take me back, to forget everything each of us had said in self-defense-anything to restore to me the dearness of your love. I had no right to tell you then, nor do I think that I have any right to tell you now, but it is so long ago it has become history, and-I no longer care."

Hesitating a moment, she looked across the wide river as she drew upon

her store of memory.

a great love.

"Frederic Tarvington, who had been a poor boy, a struggler, made his own way, educated himself—and you know what that meant in those days, in Maryland—and loved me." Her hands dropped into her lap, her voice fell softly; and on her lips was the most beautiful smile that Tilghman had ever seen there. Somehow, it was the glorified smile of her girlhood days, and reminiscent to the man who watched her of all the sweetness of that time; and yet it was the smile of a woman who has realized the educative value of

"Yes," she narrated; "pitted against you as he was, he loved me, and asked me to marry him-to wait for him. You see, we were young in those days. When I told him that I loved you and was going to marry you, he took me in his arms and blessed me in those words which have had on them the breath of God, and are written into the age-long life of a race: 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.' I have never, even to this day, been able to look upon that as boyishly melodramatic," she interposed hurriedly, in response to his quizzical glance. "I think I realized as never before what the sincere love of a man might mean. A little afterward you came into the room and found me cry-You demanded an explanation. You insisted that I tell you what had occurred. I could not, and I would not. You had met Tarvington coming away from the house, and the conclusions that you drew were imaginary. The things he had said to me were sacred; and I felt that I must respect the secret which he had kept even from me. I felt that I ought to protect him against you, the man whom I did love. I thought I owed him that silence as reparation. And because I would not explain, you flung away in a pet-you jilted me," she smiled, with indignant scorn, unaware of coquetry.

"But I came back to you," he insisted, in some bewilderment, the masculine intellect failing to grasp the subtle sense of injury which had oppressed her. "I couldn't stay away from you; and you sent word to me that you never wanted to lay eyes on me again."

"Yes, I remember how it was," she answered, with a gentle air of superiority. "You came back because you thought you had been abused, not because you thought that I had suffered all the humiliation that a discarded woman endures; and I—loved you still. You see, I could not protect you against myself, as I had Frederic Tarvington."

Tilghman's eyes smoldered, although his voice was gentle, as he responded slowly to her tardy explanation:

"Yet loving me, as you say, you sent me away from you with the message that you did. Jean, could you not make a sacrifice of your pride?"

Jean made no attempt to answer him for a few seconds, then she said:

"I had just been trying to make out the motives that governed one man's life. It seemed to me then, and it has always seemed to me since, that if a man wants anything very badly, he can find a way to get it. It's the winning the thing that is denied that makes the thing worth while in the end."

Tilghman's mouth straightened to a thin line; but his eyes had a new light in them as he realized for the first time a woman's admiration for achievement. He had known youthful ambitions, but they had died for lack of motive force. He wondered if her words expressed an impersonal creed, or if they were the accrued result of personal experience. Probably the latter, as Iean was feminine in all things. But, most of all, he wondered if her theories of life referred to Tarvington or himself, or to both; judging from the curl of her upper lip, there was a fine scorn for both of them in the ambiguity of her words. That thought lightened his heart. His case did not look so hopeless, if she could pick flaws in the man she regarded as a paragon.

"How did you happen to come to New York?" he asked suddenly.

Jean smiled slightly. "My elder brother, with whom I made my home, like the man in the Bible, had married a wife; and as it happened to be your rather impossible cousin, Annie Lee"—Jean retained certain prejudices, he observed dryly—"it didn't promise much for me in that household; so I secured a position here in a library."

"If I had only known it," groaned Tilghman. "Why—why didn't you let me know? Why didn't you send me

word?"

"You had not left word with me where you were going, and—I had not forgotten you then." She tried to make the words formal, but the voice broke

with a girlish quiver.

Tilghman put out his hand and held hers for a moment. Before, he had been half-afraid of this curiously cold little image that had taken the place of the spontaneously light-hearted girl whom he had known and loved in those other years. But now she let her hand rest in his, as if it had found an accustomed place.

"Did you forget me afterward?" he

asked.

She did not answer. The voices of the summer were all about them; and the fading light hid the expression of her eyes. "Go on," said Tilghman tersely.
"Tell me. Have you gone on being a

librarian?"

"I kept the place three years," related Jean, "and then I fell ill. I was in the hospital for almost three months. Tarvington, who was living here at the time, heard of it: I do not know how, for I had never seen him after I left home. He came to see me; brought me flowers; took me out for my first drive; and, I have always felt, gave me the desire to get well." Tilghman winced at the recital of these services. Jean went on: "I do not think any one but those who have felt it could know what I endured as I lay there getting well and wishing I were dead. My savings were all gone. My situation, which was my living, was of course lost to me; and in my weakness I felt that the city was like a great machine, grinding on, day and night, demanding its hourly tribute of human life and human effort to keep it go-

"If I had only known!" muttered

Tilghman.

"Some of us prostrate ourselves before the city and let it run over us," Jean continued stiffly. "Others, like you, feed and watch it, enjoying its performances until you get tired. Then you go away; but those of us who have to stay here and wrest from it a living, we know that it takes all there is of us. Then it grinds us to powder, to form us into miniature reproductions of itself—heartless, soulless, indifferent, incapable of any real emotion—capable of nothing but a consuming cynicism."

Tilghman did not doubt the personality of that theory. Dear little girl, how hotly she had always resented his suppressed amusement at her seriousness. He turned to her abruptly:

"Jean," he asked; "Tarvington wanted to marry you once; how does it happen that you did not accept him then, and that in all these years you have refused his devotion?"

If he thought to surprise her into a confession, he failed. But for one crashing moment she looked deep into his eyes; and, for the first time, he

saw life with a woman's vision, and found it deep with destiny, sad with unexpressed heart-breaks, brave with the unspoken capacity for endurance.

But Jean's eyes were neither sad nor tragic habitually; she was too much alive to suggest the dreamer. There was repression written in her face; but the whole personal effect spoke of unconquerable energy and the enthusiasm of an awakened mind. The face, if it had expressed the ever womanly reproach: "Now see what you've done," immediately assumed its normal composure as she answered his question.

"I am sure," she said, with conscientious detail, recalling the time; "I am very sure that neither of us thought of marriage in those first days after my illness. The spur of the city was on Tarvington. He was just starting out in business for himself. He offered me an office position with him, and initiated me most patiently. I studied the principles of business, the theories and practise of finance; I took up everything to fit myself for my place. Those were dark days full of struggle for both of us. I worked alongside of him determined that he should succeed. I never thought of myself. I was concerned only for his success. I think he forgot that I was anything but a machine; and I had taught him to believe that I-would never forget you." Again the voice changed from the selfreliant woman's to the pathetic girl's.

Tilghman set his teeth hard. "Look at me, Jean," he said imperatively, yet

with a caress in his voice.

She obliged him; but even in the dim light, her eyes told no tales that he could read. They seemed to be set in a face of calm, that was a vivid contrast to his impassioned one.

"Since you care about nothing but his success, are you going to marry Tarvington, now that he has made himself a financial power?" he asked, with

a veiled sneer.

"He was married five years ago to Fannie Farrell," she replied quietly, but with a side glance that took in the full effect of her answer. "You remember her, do you not?"

"She was a silly little fool!" Tilghman's rejoiner was curtly descriptive.

"Oh, no! she is not." Jean contradicted him, but smiled more indulgently. "You never liked her because she had a fashion of laughing at you and making you appear ridiculous. She was never impressed by your youthful importance, or took you seriously as I did;" and the half-gesture with which she said the words brought back to him all the sweetness of her girlish consolations. "She has a sweet nature, and she is just the woman for Tarvington. They live most happily together. She is fond of home, of life, of joy, and laughter; and she brings him relief from the strain of business. I am too somber, too oppressed by the realities of life, to bring to any one the things that amuse and entertain."

"Nonsense!" said Tilghman, as he recalled the delights of their courtship. He leaned forward, a note of appeal instead of command in his voice.

"Jean, Jean!" he cried. "Come, let me take you back to Maryland! Come—do come! I haven't seen the old place in twelve years. Go with me," he pleaded, with the old boyish eloquence. "Think how lovely it is there now! The trees, the river, the bay, the horses. In all these years I have seen no place like it. Think of all the things that you should have, the things that are yours by right, the needs of your nature. Oh, I know you; better than, for all your theories, you know yourself. You should have a home, the luxuries of life, love, children."

He took her hand, soft and pliant as twelve years ago, and drew it up and down his cheek caressingly—laid it upon his lips, kissing it passionately.

"Think how you live here! A hall bedroom in a boarding-house; the clash of the city all about you; the constant presence of people; the prison-pictured rows of houses. Your pleasures, a journey to Europe each summer; your list of friends and diversions—nil, because you will not have them; and the everlasting grind of work always on you. Give yourself to me, and let me try to retrieve myself."

The tenderness of the caress and words swept over her, bringing a surging flood of memories poignantly sweet: but back in her thought lurked a vital distrust of herself, of her continued capacity to make him happy. If her ideals of life had not changed, her attitude toward life had, and the years that lay between them had left her in ignorance of him. In this meeting, she had been the speaker, he the listener. Like the gossamer of a dream, there came to her a Maryland morning when she was riding through the dewy freshness of early day; riding with this man in their youth through a glory of trees and meadows and sweet sunlight back to the long, low, red brick house, with the pillared white porches which she and her brother called home. There were only the two of them in that home in those days.

The broad stone flagging echoed again, for her, with the tap of her horse's hoofs. The dogs were leaping with frantic yelps of joy; and the man she loved was standing beside her, his hand on her saddle, his arms ready to lift her down, his eyes cold and hard, his mouth fixed and stern. But—

How long ago it was!

"No," she said, as the man watched the quiver of emotion pass over her and fade. "No"—softly, regretfully—"I am afraid your old sweetheart is dead. The currents of my existence have been turned from their natural channels. have lost the capacity to appreciate the things that you offer. I live as a man lives. My hall bedroom in a boardinghouse is all that I require. I do not ask for more space or more fun. The thrall of the city is on me; it has written itself on these leaves of my life. I love it. I am lonely in the country. The crowds make up for me the pageant of life here. The people, the stir, the movement are the symbols of the only things that I care for; and in the ups and downs of business there is an intoxicating rhythm and swing-the systole and diastole of my being.

"I am infatuated with the dash, the daring, the maneuver of business. It is a splendid battle always going on, never ceasing; and my general is the greatest tactician on the field. No"—she laid her hand gently on his—"the masculine fiber of my brain has been overcultivated because the feminine fiber of my heart has been atrophied. And you—you must admit that you have not counted any of my interests in the sum of your life. We have nothing in common. I—do not know you. You and I have lost the years between."

Tilghman got up restlessly in the midst of her self-analysis and stood beside her. She had been the inspiration of his youth. She was the love of his life. He could not, he would not listen to her. He would not give her up.

She looked up at him, and said softly—and her voice was a reminder of youthful ambitions and unforgotten

dreams:

"I told you that the woman in me is dead; but one part of it is alive—the part that made Frederic Tarvington. I helped him to success. I sustained and cheered him. I fought for him in ways that he will never know. I taught him how not to love me but to need me. I taught him the things that only a woman can teach a man, as he taught me the things that only a man can teach a woman. The first lesson is: How to make life instead of letting life make you."

There was not the slightest hint of self-consciousness or boastfulness in this, but Tilghman, enveloped in an atmosphere of memories, stirred to recall his lost ideals of conquest and achievement, caught the spirit of her thought. She had blown upon the dull coals of his ambition until they flared to a responsive glow; and he answered the challenge of her eyes rather than of her words. Like a flame there flashed upon him the revelations of self; the knowledge that life held just one compelling impulse for him-the demand not only for the love, but for the admiration of this woman.

"Jean," he said abruptly, and there were eagerness, purpose, and will in his voice, "I am going to cast myself into the city. I am going to live your life. Will you take me in hand? I'm

ashamed—ashamed of myself. I've been kicking around the world putting in the time like a lazy dog, blaming you for spoiling my life. I cannot give my life to you; it has always been yours; but will you make it over for me?"

She turned and looked sharply at

him.

"You must!" he said commandingly.

"Jean!"

"How can I mold your life?" she queried, balancing the problem between them with serious reluctance. "You have molded it for yourself. I have

had no part in it."

"But you have," he asserted. "You have always dominated my thought as you are swaying it now. I cannot think of my life without you. You have always been in it. You cannot refuse now what I ask. I will not let you. You would always find me afterward sitting at the gateway of your memory to accuse and haunt you; and you know it. This time I am going to protect you against yourself;" and he smiled resolutely at her.

She shook her head. "You are putting your burdens on me," she complained; but at her helpless gesture he leaned down and took her hand closely in his and held it with unquestioning

possession.

Memory never denies the appeal of association. That close grasp of Tilghman's hand on her own brought before her a procession of the ghosts of their yesterday-their mutual past. It revealed to her that this man expressed to her the one enduring thing in her nature, the one natural impulse of her whole life. The past, which had been transfigured for her by him, had also molded a future which was the goal of her being. His words, his presence. the man himself, had power to move her as no one else ever had or could. He had stripped bare her daily existence with whose routine she had lulled herself into a passionless calm; he had shown her its bleak framework -a mere scaffolding which she had thought to call a home.

Tilghman drew her to him, as he said

passionately:

"Oh, you little thing! You little thing! You drove me away; and you have brought me back again. You have followed me across the deserts of the world. You have haunted every day of the years. You would not let me forget you; though, God knows, I have tried to. You have broken my heart and mended it again; and there is no one like you in all the world; and you are mine! You are mine!"

She caught her breath. "I have always loved you," she said simply. Tilghman understood. Then she added, and her voice shook with pride and pleasure: "I knew, I have always known, that you could do anything that you willed—you could be so much, do so much—it seemed such a shame for

you to drift through life."

Looking tenderly down upon her, the flare of her feeling was reflected in Tilghman's face; but he remarked de-

cisively:

"There's just one thing we'll have, though; and that's a fair division of labor. You can take care of me—of my home; and I'll take care of the busi-

ness. I'm not Tarvington."

He drew her over to the parapet. The magic enchantment of the night and the city was setting a circle of blazing lights about them; and the river was twinkling with the illumination of many water-craft. The sweetness of the summer was all about them; and the dusk folding over them held them in its shadow. "Look!" exclaimed Tilghman. "It's a fairy-land."

Jean's eyes were like stars as, facing the panorama of the night upon the water, she lifted them to Tilghman, supplementing his thought with her

own.

"The river always used to look so lonely pushing its way on; but now I like to think that it has the strength of the hills to guard and protect it."

And Tilghman forbore to laugh or tease her change of mood. He only

asked, indulgently:

"But how about its lost identity—the

ocean?"

"Its goal," she whispered softly; "that is why it left the mountains."





AY, old man!—give us a tip on the Hawk's Flight? How are you going to run there?" Cameron asked, slapping old Tommy Gridley on the back and edging around his elbow.

Old Tommy laughed loudly. The epithet was affectionate rather than descriptive. He was not really old—only forty-odd, fresh-colored, hearty, and handsome in a big bluff way. Add that he was, in spite of his millions, the pattern of kindly chivalry not only toward pretty women, but old folks, poor and luckless ones, and especially little children; and it is by no means astonishing that he was easily forgiven for never thinking small beer of himself or his belongings.

"Huh! You don't think I interfere between a man and his bets, any more than a man and his wife," he said airily, looking quite over Cameron's head. "But, son, if you're after solid, frozen bed-rock truth, why, here's a piece of it! I'm going to run first and second in the Hawk's Flight. Can't help it, indeed—with such a pull at the

weights."

Cameron whistled. Young Watrous, beside him, shook his head, and said reflectively: "But think of the route! I don't believe there's a three-year-old—in training or out of it—able to stay with Waterwand for the distance—much less beat him—"

"Waterwand has got to pack a hundred and twenty-nine pounds. Put that in your pipe-dreams and smoke it,"

Gridley interrupted with superb disdain. "If I was afraid of anything," he went on, "it would be Kitty Creel—that Candlemas blood is the devil to go and stay as well. I'm taking her to show after Sarcenet and Sailor Boy, my pair—though Luxor may give her an argument."

"H'm! "Then it's all settled?" Cameron said interrogatively, his eyes dancing. Old Tommy cuffed him affectionately, saying: "Certainly—as far as the glorious uncertainty of racing admits. Run along and play now, little boys. It's just a minute to the saddling-bell; and I've got to go see about my sweetheart—must fetch her in ahead of the crush, you know."

With that he strode off. The two friends looked after him, smiling, but Watrous shook his head, and said half under his breath: "Can you make out old Tommy? In spite of his conceit—he's always dead sure, cock-sure, he has a pull at the weights in everything—he must see what's going on."

"How d'ye mean?" Cameron asked in the same key. Watrous answered even lower: "Why, with Louise Damer and young Gerard. Did you ever see a poor fellow more palpably

hit?"

"No," Cameron said, nodding. "But there, old Tommy is not quite so foolish as he looks. He has really implicit faith in the girl—as indeed he would have in whomever he might have elected to make Mrs. Gridley. You see, he admires himself so sincerely that it appears to him impossible that other people can do less. In fact, I overheard him say substantially as much to Mrs.

Oxford while we were getting down from the coach-top. The match is, you know, of her making-she has brought up her young sister especially to marry old Tommy, whom she herself has meanwhile kept in leading-stringsstrings that he never felt. She was fairly wild with him for putting Louise in Gerard's charge—but when she tried to make him see the danger, he only laughed his biggest laugh, and told her he knew what he was doing; he was sorry for Gerard, and wanted to help him get over his infatuation by giving him all possible chances to speak out. More than that, he-old Tommy-did not want to have it said that Louise had married the only fellow that ever courted her-"

"Delicious! Old Tommy all over," Watrous interrupted. Then holding up his hand: "There's the bell-and here comes old Tommy with the lady of his heart. Plague take him! She's the only one of his good fortunes that I find it in my heart to grudge him."

All eyes turned gateward as old Tommy swept through it, convoying a creature lithely slender, and as full of grace as a wind-blown reed. The Damer girl was nineteen, convent-bred, well-born, poorer than poverty, and proud in a shy, silent, bitter fashion. Her small head, set finely upon a long white neck, was overhung with clouds of silken hair so dusky that it made her violet eves and creamy skin almost incongruous. She trod lightly, with feet almost absurdly small, yet held herself upright as a flower on its stalk. Young Gerard was on her other hand, his heart all in his eyes. Mrs. Oxford came behind them, chatting gaily with Major Dorrance, although her eyes were unquiet. She was chaperon to the houseparty which old Tommy had gathered at his country place, Fairways, for the especial purpose of seeing the Hawk's Flight won and lost.

The horse-race was a classic transplanted to Sea View Park, the newest, fine course which neighbored Fairways. Gridley was far from being a horsy man; he kept up a racing-stable as he owned a yacht, an opera box, a town house, various cottages and country houses, because he felt all those things appertained properly to a man of his fortune. But it was his nature to approve whole-heartedly of whatever he had or did; so upon Hawk's Flight day he was in the highest possible feather, supremely confident of winning, but certain not to be cast down if

perchance he lost.

"Now you look out for her, Gordon —and be sure you look sharp," he said to young Gerard as he placed Louise in the shade of the thickest tree. "I want her to see everything-be sure you tell her which horse is which-and when you hear the call to post, take her right down to the rail in front of the clubhouse. I've got men there now holding the place for us-of course I'm coming. too, as soon as the parade is well begun."

"Louise had much better sit on the piazza," Mrs. Oxford interrupted. Old Tommy looked at her a little impatiently. "You mean you had rather be up there," he said. "Well, madame, there's nothing in the world to hinder-you've seen races enough-and you can waste this one talking to that blunderhead... Dorrance. Besides, you never did care a pin about the ponies. Louise is another sort-it's going to be a fine, close finish-and I'd rather lose-almostthan have her miss seeing all there is to see when our colors come first.'

At the last word he laid his hand lightly, fondly, upon Louise's arm. She wore his colors-cream-white splotched with scarlet. It was the first thing he had ever asked her to do, although they had been betrothed now for six weeks. Louise shivered faintly at his touch, but smiled at him, too, and said gaily: "And I wouldn't miss it, either-not for I love horses-and I've anything. never seen them really run. Marian is wicked. We shall pay no attention to anything she says."

"Not a bit," old Tommy assented, patting Louise's hand under cover of making way for an impatient passerby. Again she shivered. Gerard saw it. So did Mrs. Oxford. Gerard turned away his eyes. Mrs. Oxford dropped hers, saying oracularly: "The time may come, Mr. Gridley, when you will wish you had paid attention." But old Tommy was already swinging off, shaking hands right and left, nodding, smiling, shouting good-natured defiances with every step he made.

As he came up to his pair of racers, Sarcenet lightly nipped his sleeve. In return, he stroked her satin neck and patted her soft nose. No sightlier creature ever trod four hoofs than this daughter of Hamburg, who stood almost sixteen hands, and was at all points the very moral and pattern of a racer. Her clear eyes, deep, even breath, the lightning play of muscles beneath her dazzling red-sorrel coat, said she was fit as a horse could be to race for a man's life-or even a woman's love. Beside her, Sailor Boy. though a fine, sturdy fellow, altogether a credit to the Mirthful strain, lost preeminence. Indeed, no other among the candidates could compare with her for looks—unless it were black Waterwand, a representative Watercress.

Waterwand was five years old, slightly taller than Sarcenet, and of a thought longer reach. He had had a phenomenal career in that he had come to his present form sound as a bell, and with more wins than losses to his credit. But he had been all along the pride of a millionaire, and thus had been so eased, pampered, indulged, as it falls to the lot of few turf kings to be. He had had likewise a trainer who knew him well enough never to set him a task that Waterwand did not feel like undertaking. What wonder, then, that the long-striding black was a popular idol-a champion that anybody who loved a good horse felt it well worth going miles to see? All the more glory, therefore, to Kitty Creel, who had twice taken him into camp-"Crazy Kitty" race-going folk named her-who could outrun the wind-if only she would.

Crazy Kitty had no looks to boast of—she was lank to ungainliness, dull of coat, and drooping of head. Notwithstanding, she got more blessings than curses, if she did add so fine an element of chance to any race for which she was

entered. Six years old, as tough as whit-leather, as cranky as a ram's-horn, her following somehow felt that in the Hawk's Flight it would say goodby to her. The handicapper had shown his respect for her by putting a hundred and twenty-five pounds in her saddle, whereas Sarcenet had to carry only a hundred and eight, and Sailor Boy

but two pounds more.

It could be said for Luxor, the Star-Ruby four-year-old, that he was sound, kind, free-going, and game as a gunflint. If he rarely came home on the bit, majestically alone, no drive was ever too hard for him: no man or woman had seen him flinch or swerve under the heaviest punishment. He began trying when the flag fell, and never stopped until he was under the wire. Therefore he had a multitude of friends-so great a multitude, that the first sight of his white-snipped bay nose first over the finish-line was sure to bring cheers at least a mile high. It was far otherwise with Rag-Time, the other four-year-old, who, despite Meddler blood, and a fine turn of speed so long as he ran in front, turned cur and quitter the minute he was collared. Why he was in the Hawk's Flight, in such company, with such entrancemoney, was a mystery that nobody had quite fathomed. But there were plenty of long-shotters to back him-since he was held at tempting odds, and known to have a chance-if only he would really try for it.

It was piteous to set against all these a gallant wreck, the starveling and crippled ghost of a once-splendid racer, Perseus, son of Kingston, seven years old, who in the good days of his prime had run and won at any distance carrying any weight. Now, fallen to the estate of bread-winner for a shifty owner wholly lacking sentiment, he awoke in genuine horse-lovers almost riotous sympathy. Gridley had tried to buy him three days before, thinking to save him from being a sorry exhibition in the Hawk's Flight; but the shifty owner had balked at selling-at least until after the big race. The old fellow had. not been out before that season; what he had shown, if anything, was strictly private. But his weight, ninety-four pounds, showed sufficiently what was thought of his chances. Dark like his sire, skeleton-gaunt, openly favoring a dicky foreleg, he limped in, last of the line, and stood with drooping head, and eves half-shut, now and then quivering slightly, as though he knew what humiliation awaited him.

Notwithstanding, when the parade went-prancing, dancing, rocketing, or soberly pacing—past the stand, with the massed ranks on either side roaring encouragement or affection at each component part, it was Perseus that caught and held Louise's eye. Gridley had just come up. Impulsively she turned to him, saying very low: "I shall bet on the last horse-the old black-no matter what you others say."

"Wait till after the start. made, bets are bets-even if your horse falls dead at the post," Gridley answered, smiling down at her. "I see you've got the pernicious long-shot habit," he went on. "Your choice is going at a hundred to one. He might be five hundred to one-only the layers hate to

waste their chalk."

"That means-they think he has no chance at all," Louise said, with a little,

hard breath.

"It looks that way," Gridley assented. "Still, the ring hasn't got quite all the wisdom there is on tap. It has the audacity to lay four to one against my entries, coupled. Think of it! After the race, it'll take those fellows until to-morrow morning to really know what's hit 'em."

"How do you know you are going

to win?" Louise demanded.

Old Tommy bent down to answer in her ear: "Because I know I have the best horses; and because I win 'most everything. Could anybody else have

won you?

A quick, leaping blush was Louise's only answer. But, all insensibly, she shrank from old Tommy's protecting nearness, pretending to be absorbed in watching the start. Really, all her soul, her maiden instinct, was in revolt. Until to-day he had never touched her familiarly; and from even this faint contact she wanted to run away. She had known from the first that she did not love him-but then-at the beginning-she had not known what love Now-with a start she checked her thought, and tried to draw away from Gordon Gerard, whom three days before she had not known any more than she had known love. But she could not move-the mass-pressure about held her almost against his breast. If old Tommy saw it he did not resent the fact. Indeed, he was gazing so raptly up-course that he might well be oblivious of all things near at hand.

The track was a big oval; a mile and three furlongs in circuit. Thus by starting a furlong up the straight, the race would sweep three times past the crowd breathlessly watching it. A record crowd for even a classic event. Since ten o'clock it had been streaming in. Now that long afternoon shadows crept slowly athwart the velvet turf, uncounted thousands stood with thumping hearts, and eager, hopeful eyes. The crush in the ring was frightfulmen struggled, swore, fought to reach the layers, who, chanting monotonously, took whatever money came. Waterwand, favorite, ruled a shade less than evens; Crazy Kitty, three to one; Headlight entry-Gridley's pair-four to one; Luxor, five to one; Rag-Time at sevens; and poor old Perseus, anything or nothing, according to a desperate bettor's fancy. Wise money, the bulk of it, went down on the Watercress horse, whose stable and following were supremely confident. Still, not a few sure-thing players went to Luxor with a rush. Not a few others saw Crazy Kitty first over the line, and bet accordingly. Rag-Time had but scattering support-his price did not tempt confirmed long-shotters. In all the ring there were but three bets on Perseus. His first jockey, now too stout for the saddle, put down the first of them for the sake of lang syne; then a black stable-boy wagered his last dollar with a reckless member of the shoe-string brigade; and, last of all, some foolish person sent in a double-eagle to be risked on the old horse. It was risked duly-although the taker felt like a highwayman as he wrote the ticket, a

hundred to one.

The day was perfect-warm, still, full of electric life. Something in it soothed the fretting thoroughbredseven the worst actors among them wheeled and backed obediently enough. Crazy Kitty did no more than lash out with handy heels at a bumptious fellow who came too near. Rag-Time stood lamblike after two wicked plunges. Sarcenet pranced the least bit, but steadied, and held herself alertly ready. She had drawn the rail. Sailor Boy the outside-thus there was a cream-andscarlet fleck at either end of the line when at last, in perfect formation, it raced from behind the barrier, and thundered down on the stand.

"Now for your bet! Quick! Perseus has lasted through the start," old Tommy said jovially, leaning across Gerard to touch Louise's hand. smiled, but shook her head, and tried to say mournfully: "What is it you call people who lose and can't pay-or won't? 'Welchers,' isn't it? And welchers are not nice. So I can't be one. · See!"-huddling some small silver in her palm—"this is all I can find in my purse. Isn't it a shame? And this my

first race!"

"You can bet-other things than money," old Tommy said banteringly; then eagerly: "I'll put up anything in the world against—just one little kiss. And you needn't think what it is you

want until after the race."

"You say that because you think you are betting on a certainty," Louise said saucily, but going all red and white. "Still-I take you-this way-that Perseus beats Sarcenet, no matter who

wins the race.'

"Heresy! The rankest sort!" Cameron said from behind old Tommy. He had come in time to hear only the last half of the wager. Gerard even had not caught the first; although from the sudden tension of Louise's pose he had felt it to be something momentous. it wholly fancy that she drooped a thought more heavily upon his shield-

ing arm? He held her half in the hollow of it, breasting like a rock the forward surge of the mass behind. He might have taken her boldly to his heart for all anybody's seeing-eyes were too rapt on the course-the broad, dun, faintly crinkled, earthen ribbon grotesquely patterning the green velvet of the sward. The velvet showed only afar off-near at hand it was invisible beneath varicolored human blotches. tremulously swaying. Each rail was a rampart, massed with heads that wagged or gaped as the plunging line tore down between them. Now and again the line was lightly gapped; now and again, too, it bellied, or sagged to a cumbrous half-moon; but nothing ran out clear of it until the half-mile post

was behind.

And, oh! it was a gallant sight—so gallant, that in watching it, Louise forgot for three heart-beats old Tommy, her betrothed, and young Gerard, her dear love-even the wager she had laid -which might mean so much or so little. Now, when it was all too lateshe knew what life meant; why flowers bloomed; why in the sweep of the universe one atom flies unerringly to its predestined atom-mate. Of course, she did not say so-not even to her heart. Instead, she nestled almost openly against young Gerard, and watched the mettled thoroughbreds sweep on and on, the colors in saddle changing momentarily as one or another gained or lost a vard. Waterwand's rider was all in black and gold; Kitty Creel had up pure emerald green; Luxor, white, with blue barrings; Rag-Time, tawdry maroon and orange; Perseus, sky-blue, touched up with white. Already the pace was heart-breaking-so fast it made the clockers stare. Evidently the Hawk's Flight was to be a runaway race rather than a waiting one; but fought through every inch between flagfall and finish. Notwithstanding, when the field swung for the last quarter of the first mile, the line had become but a long, straggling slant, with Waterwand leading it; and Sailor Boy, the stout-hearted, a strong and speedy last.

The surprise of all was Perseus. All

through the first half he had nodded painfully in his stride, though still keeping place. Now he ran true and balanced, though not with the matchless, stealing action of better days. But so far Crazy Kitty had clearly the best of it. She was almost even with the leader, and running under double wraps. So far, also, the race had been run on courage-whips hung idle, spurs were free of stain. But as they swept the turn and on into the straight, heading a second time for the mark, Rag-Time got three stinging slashes that sent him up almost even with Waterwand. There he hung gamely enough through the next furlong; but, as the human ramparts began to roar him welcome, he shut up like a jack-knife, sulking visibly.

"Seven to one is burning up. Luckily there won't be a very big smoke," Cameron said in old Tommy's ear.

Old Tommy chuckled hard. "Even money'll be burning up now pretty soon," he said. "Lord! but those boys of mine can ride to orders. Told 'em to let the heavyweights race their legs off out in front, lying right behind them all the time—then when they were all out, come on and win."

"No doubt they'd do it—if they could," Cameron said. "But they can't. As I've said all along, this is Water-

wand's day.

"Say, rather, Crazy Kitty's. Look at her, will you!" Watrous chanted ecstatically, jumping up and down: "She isn't after Waterwand! Oh, dear no! She's got him! Got him when nobody, not even I, ever believed she could do

it again."

True enough, Crazy Kitty went over the line this second time three lengths to the good—but Waterwand was not out of it, with all that long route still before him. At the furlong-pole beyond he lapped her—at the quarter his nose was level with her throatlatch. She had taken the rail in her mad, arrowy rush. Sarcenet was right behind, and going like a whirlwind, but well within herself. Luxor had run consistently—he had still his slim chance. Only two contenders, indeed, were out

of it—Rag-Time, who had chucked it, and was stopping with every stride, and Perseus, who had never had a chance.

Plunging, leaping, going down to it, coming away from it, in long, spacedevouring strides, now almost flat on earth, now thrusting forward like jayelins giant-hurled, the game creatures fought it out, all through the outstretch, the backstretch, and on to the cruel, last furlongs of the straight. At the head of it, Sailor Boy dropped back, beaten but not disgraced-what three-year-old could be, in such company, with records already smashed? Luxor was in little better case: though still he hung gamely. Perseus ran in front of Sailor Boy, and behind Luxor. Out in front, a splendid, long-striding black fellow, a big, ungainly brown, and a beautiful copper-red creature, all compact of breath and fire and stay. strove mightily, valiantly one with another, running almost like a team. Their riders, sitting down, were doing all they might with hand and heel, with steel and catgut, to send on the flying two at yet madder speed. But strive or strain, urge as they might, neither gained a yard. Hearts pumping mad-, ly, eyeballs staring, breaths coming in hoarse, sobbing pants, the three swept side by side in the last supreme test.

Down, down they came-whips flying, spurs plowing furrows in the reeking flanks. Now the black horse led by inches, now the red mare, now the big, ungainly brown with the greenjacketed rider, blotted out alike the black and the red. Breathless, upright, deadly white, men and women watched them, cried their names, calling to them, or else covered the eyes when the tension got too sharp. Still on and on, still locked, ran the three. A blanket might have covered them-nobody had eves or thought for anything else. And then all at once, from far back, like a ghost, a thief in the night, swept something—a starveling bony anatomy that had once been a great racer. Mouth open, ears flat, neck stretched to the utmost, no longer nodding, no more a cripple, Perseus the despised came to himself—came at long and at last to his rightful place with the first.

Then indeed there was cheering-a roar full of heart. Nobody believed in the least that the old fellow could winbut oh, to see him thus make it an evelash finish with the cracks! It was like a resurrection-all about women sobbed to see it: men cheered madly again and again, heedless whether they stood to win or lose. On, on, amid salvos and clapping, the racers flew-and now there were two who led, and two who followed. Waterwand, the kingly black, had lost to Crazy Kitty. Sarcenet, the copper-red beauty, could not quite come up with the rack-a-bones.

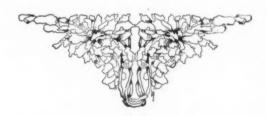
It was thus they swept the finish-line, the cheers suddenly stilling to a dead hush. By some miracle, the judges saw Crazy Kitty first-nobody else made it anything but a dead heat. Perseus had the place-it was Waterwand to show. But he got no such acclaim, even from those he had won for, as greeted the red sorrel beauty. Cameron was but the first of a great multitude who wanted to wring old Tommy's hand, and give him joy of owning the filly of the century. Never had there been, never would there be, another of her age, to go the route and live the pace set by such company. Thus was old Tommy consoled-if indeed he needed

consolation. He did not look as if he needed it in the least, when he leaned over Louise, who was still sobbing softly, asking as he touched her arm: "Can't you dry your eyes and tell me what I lost?"

He said it jovially, meaning to distract her and quiet her nerves, which might well be overwrought. But she turned to him a face flushed, dewy-eyed, yet wobegone, and answered: "Nothing of account—only—myself. I want you please to buy Perseus—and give him—and me—our freedom. If—if you will—I shall love you for it all my life."

"And if I won't-you'll hate me," old Tommy supplemented, staring at her, dazed and heartbroken, a full half-minute. Then her divine blush, her glance at Gerard, enlightened him-made him understand that in Love's handicap, youth has always an invincible pull at the weights. He looked at her-so girlish, so untried, so fitly matched with youth; and he sighed a long sigh. But at bottom he had a heart of gold-a man's heart, hating unmanly advantage. Lightly, with one look of renunciation, he took Louise's hand between both his own, slipped from a finger the ring that he had so proudly placed there, and

without a word laid the hand, soft and naked, in young Gerard's strong clasp.



CONTENTMENT

A ROSE beside a cabin door,
A sunbeam on the spotless floor:
And few there were who, passing, saw
A rose, a sunbeam, nothing more.
BETH SLATER WHITSON.



The STONEBORO SERVICE









T was a very good cigar. The Honorable William Orrock Homer lighted it carefully, leaned back in the seat of the smoking-car, and reflected that his undertaking was begun

under auspices befitting its importance. It was not every day, or, rather, every night, that one called upon a bishop. Moreover, in the present instance, the bishop was a prince of his order. common repute he was the richest prelate in his church; and of creaturecomforts had a keen appreciation. According to the Sunday Supplement, a copy of which reposed in the Honorable William's breast pocket, Stoneboro House held an accumulation of such worldly goods as only critical taste and abundant means can garner. Foremost among these treasures was the Stoneboro Service. Allowing for all exaggeration, that collection of one hundred and four pieces of gold plate made, by the calculations of the Honorable William, his present trip quite worth while; and his mind busied itself rather with the means of speedily and safely disposing of what he should be able to carry away than with any obstacle which might interpose itself between himself and the object of his professional desires.

Indeed, that a serious hazard was involved had not occurred to him, after his visit to the place two nights previous to this journey. The only cloud upon a very bright prospect was developed from nothing more tangible

than a suspicion that the thing was "too easy" for one of his skill and reputation.

To take advantage of a jolly and well-fed old gentleman, who had deliberately removed himself from the material protection of street lights and the police, and who declared that faith in the honesty of one's fellow man was tantamount to absolute security of one's own person and possessions, jarred vaguely upon the Honorable William's sensibilities. If the prize had been less rich: if the Honorable William's funds had been less low; and, last but not least, if new territory had not, for reasons of which he, had acute remembrance, been the only safe ground for his operations, it is entirely probable that he would have hesitated to shatter the confidence of the philosopherbishop, whatever the Honorable William's skepticism of such philosophy. Now, luxuriously inhaling the smoke of his cigar, he stilled his lingering qualms with the reflection that, if he did not make a try for the Stoneboro Service, some other one of the million and more readers of the Sunday Supplement aforesaid was very likely to do so. Again he reviewed the field for his undertaking.

The grind of the brakes and the call of the conductor brought him to his feet; and he swung off the platform of the smoking-car to the ground just outside the range of the Stoneboro station lights. Half an hour's walk brought him to the gateway of Stoneboro House; and, secure in his knowledge that no dog roamed the lawn, he worked his way among the shadows of

the trees until he was directly opposite a bay window upon the ground floor of

the long, stone house.

By the Honorable William's calculations it was one o'clock of Saturday morning, and, very properly at that hour, not a light showed anywhere in the building looming before him. Accordingly he removed his shoes, felt in his pocket for his electric torch and tools, and moved forward. Ten minutes later he had slid the latch of a sash with a knife-blade, raised the window, lifted the hook on the inside shutters, and was listening with ear to the slats. The slow, mathematical beat of a big clock intensified the stillness within. The Honorable William gently pushed the shutters back and climbed over the window-ledge. To his attentive ear the clock repeated solemnly: No! Yes! No! Yes! And that was all.

But by force of habit he stood a minute motionless, his body flattened against a heavy curtain which hung across the recess, before he stepped into the room. Then the curtain fell behind him, cutting off observation from without; and the pressure of a finger on the button of the electric torch shot a cone of white light across the room. It revealed a double doorway opposite, rows of low bookcases against the walls, and, as its-rays swept in a circle, another doorway, also hung with curtains at the end of the room. The Honorable William recognized an arrangement which provided a dining-room beyond those curtains; and, if report was correct and the bishop's confidence sincere, there, he reasoned, should be the Stoneboro Service ready to an appreciative hand.

The Honorable William parted the curtains cautiously; found it solemnly dark, and respectably smelling of fruit and claret, and crossed the threshold.

The electric torch tunneled the blackness. As it moved to the right, in the middle of an orderly array of massive old silver, its flare brought out dull yellow gleams from a great oval platter of gold which was propped against the polished mahogany backpiece of the sideboard. The Honorable William re-

marked to himself that the Sunday Supplement editor was a man of judgment. In his admiration he forgot utterly the scruples of an earlier and

less crucial moment.

When he stood close to the sideboard. the torch revealed also certain other pieces of lesser size than the platter. but of a color which reflected not less credit upon the bishop's purse and good taste. The Honorable William was not long in coming to a conclusion. The silver, which would have been well worth while under different circumstances, must be left where it stood. Bundles were inconvenient and suspicious things; and even his capacious pockets would be filled to overflowing by the gold plate before his eyes. He silently lifted the big platter, directed the light upon it to be sure that he was making no mistake, and, in the act of slipping it into a deep pocket, stiffened in astonishment.

To nerves under the best of control, a hand coming from the darkness behind and gripping one's shoulder is enough to impart a shock; when to this is added the sensation of a cold circle of metal pressed against the nape of one's neck, momentary paralysis is quite excusable. These sensations were precisely what caused the Honorable William to stand with the platter poised in air; his alert brain and not less active muscles for the instant failing him. Then a voice back of. him spoke in cool and low tones: "Put that platter down and put your hands up!"

The Honorable William obeyed—the circlet of metal at the base of his brain was unpleasantly suggestive.

"Now," said the voice, "come with

me!"

Again the Honorable William did as he was told. He had a logical mind even in extremities; and he suspected that a bullet fired into the neck at a lowering angle was likely to traverse a considerable range of anatomy. He turned at the twist of the hand on his shoulder, moved ahead in the darkness, and passed through a doorway into what apparently was the hall; for immediately he felt a waft of cool air.

Then he was pushed out upon the porch, and from that down three steps to a pathway. There his conductor spoke once more, "I can't miss you with the gun jammed into you, you know," he remarked. "So I wouldn't try to break away. And I wouldn't

yell, either, if I were you."

This last statement, though it struck the Honorable William as somewhat superfluous, he received without comment. Indeed, a growing surprise at the shape the situation was taking left him without a ready reply; and, in silence, he allowed himself to be marched across the lawn and so under the trees, until suddenly against their leafy shadows stood out a darker bulk; and he was brought to a halt before the door of a one-story frame building.

At one side of this building, at the height of his shoulders, a thin slice of light showed where the breeze gently bellied a window-curtain. To the Honorable William's ears came a murmur of voices, and a laugh. Then his conductor stretched around an arm, a door was pushed open, the Honorable William was shoved ahead, and the door He found himself standing in a small room. It was hung with some very bad paintings in water-color and oil. In its middle was a deal table, on which were a deck of cards and a quantity of yellow, blue, and white pokerchips neatly stacked in four lots of varying size. Beside the chips were three glasses, holding the dregs of what looked like claret. A bottle of seltzer and some cigars were at one end. Around the table sat three men; a fourth chair, pushed away from the table, was empty.

The Honorable William blinked in the sudden light. Then a smile of appreciative comprehension illumined his face. "Sorry to break in on your game,

gentlemen," he said blithely.

For a moment after he had spoken the three men sat as they had from the first, fixed with astonishment, their jaws fallen, their eyes moving from his face to the pistol still at his neck, then to the motionless figure of his captor, and so back to the Honorable William again. Then the one who sat at the head of the table, a big, light-haired man, regained the power of speech long enough to remark: "Well, I'll be——!" and promptly relapsed into mute wonder.

The spell, however, had been broken. A tall, slender man with two brilliant eyes and thin lips leaned forward, flipped the ash from his cigar, and said dryly: "It was claret that you went after, Gerald. I don't see it." And with that they all laughed.

"No," said the Honorable William's captor, "I forgot the claret, Clapham. I found this gentleman 'lifting' the governor's plate, and brought him along

instead."

"May I ask why you used him as a substitute?" inquired Clapham. "From all appearances, he is in need of a drink himself."

The Honorable William was prone to swift dislikes. The wit of the speaker struck him as peculiarly ill-timed, and yet he managed a smile; there was something in the atmosphere which, to his sensitive being, suggested delivery from threatening complications. "A drink is just what I would like," he agreed.

There was a roar of laughter from all but the slender man. He favored the Honorable William with a sneer. "But, seriously, Gerald," he said; "we want the claret, and we want to go on with the game, Can't you wake up the gardener and give this fellow in charge?

We're wasting good time."

The Honorable William's captor answered promptly. "And just as seriously, Clapham, that's the very thing I can't do. Don't you see? If I wake anybody to turn over our friend to him, I'll have to tell where I found him, and that will mean a lot of questions. How did I happen to hear him? Why did I bring him here? What were we all doing here at this time of night? Of course any explanation we could invent would sound very plausible! And, equally, of course, when the governor got the gardener on the rack, he wouldn't find out a thing! It takes a better man than John to meet my fa-

ther's eye when he's asking disagreeable questions. And, besides, every one of us would have to lie like blazes, or—well, you know what the bishop would say to poker-playing, and on his own place. It would be easy enough for 'Doc' and Billy—they could clear out home. But, the bishop's my parent and you're his guest. No escape for us. No, thank you, none of it for me. I've figured in enough scrapes already, as 'the unregenerate offspring of that eminent divine.'"

The man at the head of the table smote his thigh. "That's so, Gerald. Guess again, Clapham," he advised. "We're in a tight box, sure enough. And it's up to you to get us out. It was you who insisted on more claret, so you're responsible for the rest."

"Very well, then," said Clapham.
"I'll settle it. Lead the man down to
the gate, and fire him out. He's not
taken anything, and he'll not come back
again, I'll wager. That's all."

The Honorable William's spirits rose, but before he could speak, Gerald broke in: "Not if I know it. Let him go now, with the governor and Mary up there at the house alone for the rest of the night? No, not by a long shot. We've got to hold him till morning, anyhow. Say, Billy, what's the matter with you? Why don't you rise to this crisis? You're usually full of inventions. Speak up!"

For the first time the Honorable William took a good look at the man adddressed as "Billy." He was below middle height, broadly built, and had reddish hair and blue eyes. He sat with his hands thrust into his trousers pockets; and for half a minute he regarded the Honorable William without speaking. The Honorable William felt that he was being sized up; and, by the same token, decided that if leniency was to be dealt out to him, it would come from this quarter. He strove to appear unconscious, and made a failure of it.

Little puckers gathered about Billy Merrihew's mouth; his eyes twinkled. "I have an idea," he said slowly; "and it accomplishes the two necessary

things. It holds our friend till daylight; and it saves time and trouble perhaps. It might also be called a sort of administration of poetic justice. It's this: Take him into the game."

The doctor burst into a shout of laughter. From behind the Honorable William came its echo. Clapham's lip curled. "Tremendous joke, no doubt," he said. "But I don't see it."

"But it isn't a joke," protested Billy. "I mean it. That is, if he knows how to play. Do you?" he finished, looking at the Honorable William.

The Honorable William nodded a little reluctantly. This was hardly what he expected. As a matter of fact, the proposition left him, so to speak, grasping at loose ends.

"I take it for granted he has the coin," went on Billy. "Every well-regulated burglar should have; else what's the use of burgling? If he hasn't, I'll stake him myself."

"Oh, quit this nonsense," growled Clapham. He let his chair down with a bang. "If we're going to play, play. Tie up the man; fire him out; get rid of him the shortest way, and start in. If not, I'm going to leave you to work it out for yourselves, and go to bed."

"I like that," returned the doctor quickly. "Clear out and leave us with a life-sized burglar on our hands? Not while I'm between you and the door, Clapham. Gerald's right, we can't turn him loose and go on with our game here. We've got to put in the night with him; and, as for tying him up, I, for one, wouldn't know a straight flush from a full hand if he was back of me, working away to get loose. I'm with Billy. Let him into the game and rob him—if we can."

Clapham shot a look of inquiry at Gerald. The information he got there was not to his liking. But he showed it only by a fleeting scowl, and immediately turned to Billy. "All right," he said. "It's the best of a bad bargain, perhaps. Let him into the game. I'm not going to kick if the rest of you are so hot for it."

"Will you behave yourself?" asked Gerald of the Honorable William. The Honorable William said "yes," and meant it. Despite a canny reservation that, when the issue came, he would part company with his entertainers without ceremony, he was minded to enjoy what he could meanwhile. Hazards appealed to him; and this one had the additional attraction of novelty. Besides, he was not unfamiliar with the game.

Gerald regarded him fixedly for a moment, then nodded his conviction, and put the pistol in his pocket.

The restraining hand removed from his shoulder, the Honorable William adjusted his coat, and, when a chair was indicated to him, sat down between Gerald and the doctor. From a vest pocket he took a ten-dollar bill. It was his all, but he did not tell them that; for he did not believe he would be called on for more. Silently he counted out the chips handed him, laid them down, and deliberately opened and closed one eye at Billy. His impudence earned for him a cigar and a glass of seltzer; and

the game began.

It was a modest game. The Honorable William, in days gone by, had sat in many a larger one; and, if he had met others who knew more about it than he did, there was little in his experience which he recalled with special regret. He usually won; he lost with philosophic calm; he played squarely all the time. He had never fancied cheating at cards. That was the game of a lazy man and a coward; and, to his way of thinking, just a shade less creditable than the skilful picking of pock-Now, with the cards in his hand, something of his old zest for the sport returned; and incidentally he decided that, if the Stoneboro Service, for the time being, was out of reach, at least his disappointment should not be without compensation.

But as he speedily discovered, this compensation, if it was to take material form, was not to be had too easily. Three of his entertainers were quite able to look out for themselves at the game of poker; and, if they evidently played for the sake of the game rather than for what it might bring them, they

missed no single point on this account. On the other hand, the fourth man, Clapham, was a puzzle. Apparently he was the least skilful of them all. Repeatedly he threw away money by reckless betting; repeatedly he managed his cards with judgment so indifferent as to abuse opportunities which the deal put in his path. When he won, he raked in his innings with a transparent eagerness. When he lost, it was with ill humor. On the surface, luck was all against him; and the Honorable William was not long in guessing that this sort of thing had been going on from the start. Furthermore, Clapham's ill fortune had begun to have its effect upon his companions. They showed their pity for him while trying to conceal it. They were slow to take advantage of his mistakes, and made embarrassed comments on his "hard luck."

The Honorable William himself, doing just a little more than to hold his own, as chance willed it, saw all this, and wondered. But his wonder was not so much at Clapham's mistakes, or at the pity which the others manifested for him, as at his own steadily increasing interest in the situation. This interest was unreasonable; not according to habit nor to his liking, but he could not dismiss it. Slowly the sensation defined itself within him that, at some previous time, he had played at just such a game. The indefinable recollection was tainted with a vague unpleasantness. Again and again he was conscious of a premonition of what was to be done or said; of the cards that would be disclosed in the winning hand; of the exact words that would be exchanged. These were by no means the deductions which any experienced cardplayer might make from the formula of the game, from the "play," from the luck and temperament of those at the table with him. Fugitive as were the suggestions, and impossible as it was for him to trace them to their origin, they persisted; and, for one of the very few times in his life, the Honorable William found himself wrestling with a mental process. Moreover, he found himself unable to let go.

So tight a hold did the thing take on him that the game itself became a secondary consideration, and the peril of his own position was forgotten. He played his cards almost mechanically: and, finally, in a rally with Clapham over a big pot from which the rest had withdrawn, he made a blunder in his betting which would have deceived only the rankest of outsiders. Awaking to it on the instant, he was amazed to see Clapham hesitate, then cast down his cards, and cry out: "Oh, take it! That ends it for me. What's the use? You've all had a shot at me, and I'll never make good at this rate."

The doctor politely expostulated. Gerald laid a consoling hand on Clapham's shoulder. "Oh, come," he said. "Luck'll change. It's bound to."

"Bound to! I'd like to know why?" declared Clapham. "No, I've had enough of it. I'm out (he named the amount), and it's three o'clock; and, even if I won every other pot from now on. I wouldn't break even."

The Honorable William happened to be looking at Billy Merrihew; and he could almost have sworn that Billy winked at him. But immediately Billy looked away, and began to fiddle with his chips.

Gerald glanced at the doctor, and the doctor nodded. Then he glanced at Billy, but he was still playing with his chips, and did not raise his head. Gerald, however, apparently took Billy's consent for granted. "As far as that goes, Clapham," he said, "there needn't be any trouble. If a change of game will change your luck, we're in for it. What do you say to boosting the limit?"

Clapham's protest was prompt and emphatic. "Not a bit of it! I won't have anybody changing the game for me. I'm no good this evening, that's all. I had no business to play."

What was it in those words that made the Honorable William suddenly close his eyes and knit his brows in an effort to remember? He did not know; and yet something hammered in his brain for recognition. Back of him, somewhere, a face, a voice, and a per-

son were associated with the very words just uttered. He strove with all his might to recall them. The ideas which had pursued and yet evaded him for two hours this time were come close; and were a little less disconnected. They had tantalized him at intervals; now they crowded upon him. Yet, when he tried to lay hold of them, they escaped him. And, all the while, he heard the voices of the doctor and Gerald and Clapham, as though from a distance.

Then, as by a flash of lightning, the place and the person he had been striving to recall were revealed to him; and he threw up his head to hear the voice he recognized say words the echo of which seemed already to be in his ears. "Well, if you all want it that way, of course *I* won't be the one to stay out. But all jack-pots and a five-dollar limit make a big game."

Looking across the table, the Honorable William found himself staring into the face of his memory. It was Clapham's.

But it was only for an instant that he stared. Billy Merrihew had turned to him. "Your pile," he said, "will last you about ten minutes at this game; so if you don't want to come in you needn't. We'd like to rob you; but not just this way."

The Honorable William smiled. "While my pile lasts I'll stay in," he said; and slowly ran his chips through his fingers. But he was not computing their amount. On the contrary, his mind was concerned wholly with a question, philanthropic in its purpose, but which he weighed rather with the idea of determining just how it might bear on his own interests.

Abruptly he came to a decision, and leisurely drew a little closer to the table and picked up his cards. He scarcely glanced at them; and his thin, keen face relaxed, his eyes grew vacant. Any one familiar with the moods of the Honorable William, perceiving these signs, would have become wary of him. His fellow players did not notice them. Their attention was centered on the game; and it was evident by their man-

ner that, while Clapham was to be given every fair chance to make good what he had lost, they had no intention of losing more themselves than was nec-

essary to that end.

Apparently, however, their caution was superfluous. For half an hour play went on with continued reverses for the one man who was out of pocket. At the end of that time he was a loser to an amount which made his companions anxious. When at last he took a small pot and followed it shortly with the capture of another a little larger, Gerald's sigh of relief was audible; and the rest

laughed.

But almost immediately luck turned again; and three times in succession Clapham lost. With the last disaster, he pushed himself back in his chair and sat up stiff and straight. His lips were tense, his eyes shining. "Damn the cards!" he shouted, and flung his to the floor. Then as swiftly he thrust a hand into his pocket and drew it forth, a bill between his fingers. "Look here!" he cried, and spread the bill out on the table. "There's my last cent. It might as well go the way of the rest. One cold hand for the pot, with every man in for an equal amount!"

The bill was for five hundred dollars. Billy Merrihew got up from his chair. "I'm out of that," he said, without looking at Clapham. The doctor's silence was significant. After a moment's awkward wait Gerald spoke. "See here, old man," he said to Clapham. "That's a bit too stiff for us. I haven't five hundred with me; and I don't believe any of the others have. It was only a friendly game. I'm mighty sorry you

got the worst of it, but-"

"But"—Clapham caught him up in a voice that was contemptuous—"but you don't care to risk a change of luck. You all—" he checked himself there. "I didn't mean just that," he said more quietly. "I ask your pardon. I thought, as luck had been against me right through the game, you'd be willing to give me a last chance to get back on the turn of five cards. But, if you don't want to, why—it's all right." He paused. "Only—" The rest died on

his lips, and a smile of bitterness that was faint, but unmistakable, crept into his eyes.

Suddenly Billy Merrihew wheeled about, and sat down at the table. "I understand," he said. "You shall have the chance so far as I'm concerned. I

suppose my check will go?"

"Certainly," said Clapham—"if you lose. But—now don't you go doing this out of any sense of pity!" he fin-

ished fiercely.

"Don't think that for a minute," Billy replied. "It's not pity, I assure you." And, picking up a fresh pack of cards, he handed it to Clapham. "Will you please to deal?" he said.

But the doctor interrupted. "Of course, if the hand is to be played I am coming in," he said; and pushed his chips a little forward. "My check for the balance," he explained.

Gerald did not speak, but he also drew up his chair, and put his chips in

front of him.

Then the Honorable William watched Clapham turn up four cards in succession to determine the deal. The fourth card, Clapham's own, was the highest. Clapham gave an embarrassed laugh. "I suppose—that is, I would rather not deal—under the circumstances," he said

But Gerald bade him go on, and the others agreed. So it was very quiet while Clapham dealt; the cards noiselessly slipping from his dexterous fingers and sliding across the table with a little soft plish. And the Honorable William noted that, so nicely were the cards impelled, each found a place in its respective pile exactly under the one which had preceded it. He never remembered to have seen the thing done so well before but once; and, with that occasion plain before his mind's vision, he leaned forward, his arms crooked on the table, and said very distinctly: "Just a minute, please, gentlemen, before you look at your cards."

It was as though he had pulled as many strings fastened to the heads of the four men. Every face came about swiftly. "I only want to say this," the Honorable William went on: "I think "—I think I can tell each man the cards he holds. And I'll begin with the dealer."

And then, with a vivid recollection to help him, he named five cards. "Will you kindly turn up your cards, Mr. Vesey?" he finished. He looked straight at Clapham.

The latter stared at him with brow wrinkled and eyes that to all appearances were honestly astonished. But his lips twitched as he demanded: "What kind of tomfoolery is this?"

"Please turn up your cards, Mr. Vesey," the Honorable William repeated; and his tongue played with the name. Then, with a suddenness that foiled Clapham's move, quick as it was, the Honorable William's body rose, his arm shot out, and he snatched the cards from the hand that sought to cover them, and spread them out, face up, on the table—three ten-spots, a king, and a deuce.

"Three of a kind, and the same old three!" remarked the Honorable William. "In five years I think you might have hit upon a new combination, Mr. Vescy." And at that he faced about upon the others. Sure of his ground now, he named in quick succession three hands of five cards each. "Am I right?" he asked.

They turned up their cards. It was as he said. Clapham's hand remained the winning one.

A moment of dead silence followed; and, because they all would have liked to look at Clapham and none had the courage to-do so, they regarded the Honorable William. Every one of them mutely asked him the same question.

The Honorable William smiled—the same time-worn, unexpected smile with which he met every crisis when his fate was in the hands of others. "Yes," he said, "it was just five years ago this month that I first saw Mr. Clapham; and I haven't seen him since—till tonight. But I have a good memory; better than his, it seems. He called himself Mr. Vesey then—for the voyage. We were crossing from Liverpool. We were both first-cabin passengers. I was returning after—well, after making a

little financial deal. And he—I don't know just what he had been doing; but in the smoking-room he did several things. One of them was the same thing he did to-night. I was an on-looker, and I saw it all. But I didn't say anything; it was none of my business. So it went through. He was the dealer, and—you see, he knows how to deal. Only on that night it was for two hundred dollars a hand. It was two hundred, wasn't it, Mr. Vesey?"

Clapham leaned back in his chair, rolling a cigar between his fingers; and at the question he looked past the Honorable William and at Gerald. "Of course, I shall leave in the morning," he said—"that is, as soon as I can receive a telegram calling me away—as a reason for a hurried departure. The whole thing's rather a pity, in a way. To tell the truth, I had no intention of trying it on when we started. It was the cards that did it. But—well, you must make my apologies to the bishop, and to Mary. I can see it will be rather awkward for her, and I wish—"

Gerald had sprung to his feet, his face flaming. "Stop!" he cried. "You've said enough. And you needn't wait for that telegram. There's a down-train at five-thirty. You'll take that. You have just good time to catch it."

Clapham's face showed a trace of annoyance, and for an instant he did not reply; then he remarked: "You are very solicitous. As it turns out, it's rather fortunate I didn't lose that five hundred." He reached out, and, picking up the bill, folded it and, put it in his pocket. "Excuse my little precaution," he explained. "I have reason, you see, to distrust our friend here."

The blow did not strike hard; and the smile with which the Honorable William acknowledged it was simply tolerant; nothing more.

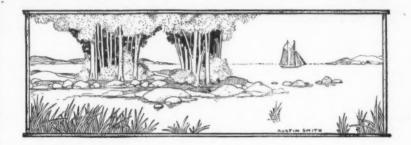
But from Gerald it drew fire. "Then you are the only one who has reason to distrust him," he returned. "And for that very reason I think you couldn't be in better hands than his, till you're away from here. That is, if he doesn't object to your company and insists on

leaving us?" he added, regarding the

Honorable William quizzically.

The Honorable William made a wry face, and looked at the others. But no one objected to his freedom, and he rose. Billy Merrihew opened the door, and Clapham passed out.

The Honorable William paused just over the door-step. The trees were beginning to blacken against the east. He drew a long breath of the cool air into his smoke-laden lungs, and stared a moment at Stoneboro House, looming in the half-light. Then he turned to the three standing in the doorway. "You might tell the bishop for me not to talk any more to the Sunday newspapers," he said. With that enigmatical remark, he wheeled about, and followed Clapham across the lawn, and so disappeared in the direction of the road to the station.



VILLANELLE OF EXPERIENCE

THE beacons of Experience ever burn,
Tall flambeaux lit from lives of joys and fears;
But we are late, and there is much to learn.

When from the questing, wiser, some return, None other may derive their price of tears; The beacons of Experience ever burn.

The knowledge they have sought we should not spurn, Their wisdom won forever bides and sears; But we are late, and there is much to learn.

As in the dark, cold depths of wells, the fern May prosper in a world it never cheers, The beacons of Experience ever burn.

We know at last the Truth we must discern Before we rise in conclave of our peers; But we are late, and there is much to learn.

From wisdom's ways our eyes will backward turn,
To bravely smile when the dread darkness clears;
The beacons of Experience ever burn;
But we are late, and there is much to learn.
W. G. TINCKOM-FERNANDEZ.

The FONT of SPEECH By Henry C. Rowland



I is no doubt true that I had overworked during the winter; you see, I had finished the last half of the score of "Florabelle," begun the previous spring; then I had entirely com-

posed "The Witch of Wonder," libretto and all, and afterward had put to music all of the songs of Howard Mabley's operetta "Tiphaine." No doubt you have found occasion to revile me many times for the "Breton Chorus," which became so popular with the hurdy-

gurdies.

"No wonder you can't sleep for the noises in your head," said the nerve specialist whom I consulted. Then, after a somewhat tedious examination, he told me that I must drop everything and get away. "And if you don't," he finished, "you will spend the rest of the winter in some quiet place where you will be in no danger of falling out of the windows. I can put it no more delicately than that. What do you like to do when not working?"

"I used to be fond of the water," said I; "cruising in small boats, and all that

sort of thing."

The doctor slapped the rim of his desk.

"Good," said he. "Then this is your cure: Go down to Florida, either to Fernandina, Tampa, Key West—it doesn't matter. Charter a good cruising boat, with a sailing-master and a

couple of men to do the rough work, and cruise around the cays. Keep away from Palm Beach and Ormonde, and the noisy places where they have brass bands."

So I followed his orders, since there seemed no way out of it, and traveled dejectedly to Key West, where I looked half-heartedly about for a suitable craft, rather hoping that I wouldn't find her. The only boat in the place which took my fancy was a chunky, beamy yawl, apparently a yacht. I asked a fisherman on the jetty if he knew to whom she belonged.

"Cap'pen Le Grand," he answered

shortly.

"What does he do with her?" I asked.

"Jes' sails around. Sponges some, an' fishes now an' ag'in-him an' his

This was about all that I could get out of him, so I determined to go along-side and investigate. There was smoke coming out of the yawl's galley-flue, so I thought that there must be somebody aboard her. I hailed a negro boy who was rowing past in a skiff, and told him to put me alongside the *Brant*, for that was her name.

"Y'all ain't goin' out aboard, be ye?" asked my fisherman informer, apparently surprised out of his lethargy.

"Yes," I answered. "Why not?"
"Oh, nothin'," he answered slowly, adding with some inconsistency: "But sence y'all 'pear to be a stranger, I'd advise ye to keep away from this yere

boat until ve learn somethin' about her

"Well," said I, motioning to my boy

to wait, "what about them?

"Oh, nothin'," he answered again, and turned away with the air of one who considers that he has discharged his duty and does not intend to do any

Perplexed and rather irritated. I stepped down into the boat and told the boy to put me alongside the Brant. It seemed to me that the little darky rowed in her direction with some reluctance.

"Aboard the Brant!" I hailed, as we

slid alongside.

A very old negro appeared in the forward companionway. His head was thickly covered with wool, as white as extreme age permits the head of a negro to become; and I saw at a glance that the old fellow was of quite a different type from the usual Southern boatman. His wrinkled face was brimful of intelligence, his forehead broad, his mouth sensitive, and his eyes large, deep, and, notwithstanding the arcus senilis which encircled each iris, lus-There was trous and thoughtful, something infinitely pleasing about the old fellow, and his voice and manner shared in this effect.

"I wish yo' good marning, sar," said he, with a bow; and his curious negrocockney accent marked him at once as

a Jamaican.

"Good morning," I replied, "Is Cap-

tain Le Grand aboard?"

"No, sar," he answered politely, but with the finality of a well-bred servant who has been instructed to discourage callers.

"I am sorry," said I. "When can I see him?"

"Carn't say, sar. Cap'n Le Grand 'e go an' come mighty onsartin, sar."

"I wish very much to see him," said "This afternoon, I, a trifle piqued.

perhaps?"

The old chap looked distressed; his lips puckered, and he scratched the side of his woolly old pate; then, as he hesitated, with his face wrinkled in doubt, there came from somewhere in the little vessel's depths a liquid, melodious whistle. It was a peculiar note, and, from its odd inflection, stirred my trained musical ear immediately. Its character is best described by the evening note of our wood-thrush.

The old man cocked his head in a manner ridiculously suggestive of a puppy dog to whom one chirps. Then

he said politely:

"If de marster comin' aboard dis marning, 'e come now mighty quick, sar. Marster, 'e 'ave 'is déjeuner at 'arf 'arfter ten, sar, an' it mos' dat now,

Please you come aboard, sar."

I thanked him and stepped aboard, telling my negro boy to wait. As I went over the side, the good impression conveyed at a distance by the Brant was confirmed by a glance about her decks. Although one could see that she had worked for a living, there was none of the slovenliness of the fisherman or sponger. Everything was shipshape, gear taut and proper, no loose ends nor "Irish pennants."

"You have a very tidy little vessel here," I said to the old negro. "The best that I have seen belonging to these waters, and the best kept. She does you

great credit."

He grinned and ducked. "Thank 'ee, sar," he answered; "thank 'ee kindly, sar;" and while he was mumbling there came again, this time through the saloon skylight, another soft, gurgling whistle. Again the old man cocked his head to listen. This time the note was sad, lingering, and filled with the mournful variance of tone which an expert ear detects in the music of the Japanese, who, it is claimed, employ in the same scale so many more notes than ourselves. The sound interested me, and I was still attempting to analyze it when interrupted by the old man.

"P'raps yo' lak for to go below, sar," said he. "H'it mighty 'ot 'ere on deck."

"Thank you," I answered, somewhat surprised. "I should like very much to

go below."

He led me down the companionway and into the saloon. The amount of space on the little vessel was surprising. Her inside fittings were simple but attractive, and everything was spotlessly

"Kindly mak yo'self to home, sar," said the old negro, and with a bow he backed out through a door in the forward bulkhead.

I looked about me, keenly interested, for a closer inspection showed the saloon to be the retreat of a student. In one corner there was a gravity-table, on which were a portfolio and a sheaf of closely written manuscript. into the vessel's sides were bookshelves filled with volumes. On examining the titles, I saw with surprise that most of them treated of technical music. There was Oettingen's work embracing the tonicity and phonicity of intervals and combined notes. Schmittberger on Chromatic Aberration, Lajoux on "Le Timbre de la Voix Humaine," and many others of similar character; then all at once I received a pleasant shock, for lying on the table with the manuscript was my own recent contribution on "The Musical Interpretation of Emotion"! I picked up the book, let it fall open, and was surprised to find it filled with marginal notes on the text.

Presently I laid down the book, and, as I did so, caught sight of a violin lying among the cushions on a transom. For a week I had been without music, and there was upon me the harmonyhunger, as potent to the musician as dice to the gambler or spirits to the inebriate. Forgetting the commands of my doctor, my own firm resolutions, and the impropriety of making free with the property of a stranger, aboard whose vessel I had come unasked, the instrument was first in my hands, then nestled lovingly upon my chest, and a moment later I was deep in the working out of a fugue which for the past week had haunted me, waking and sleeping.

Ah, but it was good to get back my dear music again. I forgot my errand, my surroundings, or it may have been something of their strangeness which inspired me; at any rate, I have seldom played as I played that morning in the cabin of the little *Brant*. I played on, while the tears gushed out of my eyes

and the notes sobbed forth under the trembling of my hand; once I heard a noise at my elbow, and, turning, saw without heeding that the old negro was standing in the doorway staring wide-eyed, while another black face peered over his shoulder. Suddenly both vanished, as it seemed to me, at a vague; tuneful interruption of my theme.

Then gradually my inspiration faded, and, as its possession of me waned, I became dimly conscious of another presence. Turning slowly, I saw a girl standing in the passage which led to the companionway. For a moment I scarcely noticed her, as the last bars of my fugue still echoed through my brain; but little by little, as I sank to earth again, the sense of surroundings returned, and with it an overwhelming embarrassment.

"I beg your pardon," I stammered.
"I—I saw the violin—and couldn't help
it. I suppose that you are Miss Le
Grand?"

She stared at me without answering, and I saw that there was a great wonder in her big eyes. Still embarrassed, I looked at her more closely, for it struck me that she was a beauty in a wild, tigerish sort of way. She was not so tall, but her shoulders were very broad, and her figure, lithe and graceful as it was, gave the impression of a tremendous physical strength. Her waist, to be sure, was small, and so were her hands and feet, but her frame was large. At the time, I thought that her eyes were black, but I discovered later that they were violet.

I am afraid that I stared, for all at once the color flamed up in the girl's face; so hot a color that it seemed as if it must actually give pain. Her wonderful eyes fell.

"You are Miss Le Grand?" I asked

again.
"I am Réné Le Grand," she said; and her voice was so rough and raw and toneless that it smote me with a sort of shock. There was the suspicion of a foreign accent, but that was lost in the jarring quality of the girl's timbreless voice, which seemed positively to corrode her striking beauty.

"I am Howard Field." I said.

came to see Captain Le Grand.'

"Are you the man who wrote that book?" she asked, in her toneless voice; and a stranger speaking voice I have never heard. It was low in key and tone: raucous and absolutely without carrying quality. Evidently she was conscious of its effect, for she brought out her words haltingly, yet with a sort of defiance. The savage color never left her face while she spoke.

"Yes," I answered, "I wrote the

book.'

"Why have you come here?" she

asked, with a child's directness.

"I came here because I saw your vessel from the shore, and I wanted to charter her for a cruise about the cays. I thought that Captain Le Grand was a sponger; I did not know that he was a musician.'

The girl's eyes were full of disbe-

lief as she stared at me intently.

"It seems very odd," she said, "that you, a composer, should come in this way to charter the vessel of a person that you know nothing about.'

"If you mean that you do not believe me," said I curtly, "permit me to say that I am not in the habit of telling lies-to strangers. I save them for my friends."

She stared at me in childish perplex-

"Why do you tell lies to your friends?" she asked.

The question was so naive that it

swept away my irritation.

"Because," I answered, smiling, "they sometimes presume on friendship to ask personal questions, and it is more polite to tell them lies than to refuse to answer."

She was about to reply, when, from somewhere on deck, there floated down to us a rapid, flutelike whistle, which rose and fell in an odd, indefinite way, It seemed to begin and end in a crochet and semiguaver.

"Father is coming," said the girl.

"Was that his whistle?"

"No, that was June-our negro boy." "Indeed!" said I. "You have a system of signals?"

A flush swept across the girl's face. It seemed to me that her eyes were lit with suspicion.

"Yes," she answered, tossing her head; and I saw that her hair shared in her ripe luxuriance. "We have a habit of whistling on board this boat."

Apparently this was true, for no sooner had she spoken than there drifted in to us from the distance a series of faint, birdlike notes. Yet, unlike most bird notes, they were baffling to follow, and wavered and quavered in a sirenlike way quite indefinable, yet all the more baffling for the vague suggestion of a certain system, a purpose and definite arrangement. In this I was again reminded of certain Oriental forms of music, especially the Japanese.

"You have certainly a peculiar system of signals," I said to the girl. "I am myself a musician, and so possess a trained ear, yet it would baffle me to try to carry all of those accidentals."

Her eyes narrowed, and she threw me a look of singular intentness; then, without a word of excuse or apology, left me abruptly, and went on deck. moment later I heard a boat rub alongside, then a heavy step upon the deck. followed by a perfect avalanche of whistling, which was checked abruptly, and succeeded by the girl's harsh, timbreless tones, interspersed by exclamations in the deep voice of a man. I was about to go on deck, when I heard steps upon the companionway. The next moment I was confronted by a striking

Le Grand seemed the masculine counterpart of his daughter, Réné. He had the same lustrous eyes, the intense expression, the patrician features, and the heavy hair; his figure was broad, bigframed, but lithe as a cat. What impressed me the most was the unusual breadth and height of his forehead. He had the head of a composer, of a Beethoven. "The man is a musical genius," was my first thought, for his head had the true musical shape; the divine proportions of which produce so often a ludicrous effect upon a man who is otherwise physically meager. One sees this combination in the orchestra sometimes-the grand musical head placed upon a spindling, slopeshouldered, sunken-chested figure. But upon Le Grand it was admirable, imposing, masterful,

He bowed to me courteously, but his deep eyes never left my face, and contained, I thought, an expression of dis-

trust.

"You are Captain Le Grand?" I asked. He bowed in assent. "My name is Howard Field," I continued, as he did not speak. "I was told ashore that you were a sponger. I am looking for a vessel to charter for a cruise, and thought that I might be able to get this one, with your services and those of your crew."

Le Grand did not answer at once, but stood eying me with a tense, distrustful scrutiny that brought the blood to my face; then he spoke, and his voice gave one a positive shock. It was, if anything, more repellent to the ear than that of his daughter; but, unlike hers, it held a penetrating resonance. Like the girl, he flushed consciously as he spoke.

"Why should you want to engage my services and my vessel for a cruise?'

he asked.

The suspicion of his tone angered me. "I don't want to engage any vessel," I answered sharply. "I am, unfortunately, compelled to do so, to carry out the orders of my physician, a nerve specialist. I am a musical composer, and have been so foolish as to work myself into nervous prostration. came here quite by chance, and, seeing that your yawl was the best for my purpose, it occurred to me to charter her. if possible. It is all quite simple, it seems to me."

He smiled a little at the testiness of my tone, then let his fine eyes rest upon

me thoughtfully.

"It is true," said he, "that I am largely dependant upon my vessel for my living-yet this is very odd."

"I see nothing odd about it," I answered curtly; "unless it is in your happening to be a musician also.'

Somewhat briefly I made him an offer for the charter of his vessel and the services of himself and crew. After a little hesitation he accepted my terms; and rather to my surprise he seemed to take it for granted that his daughter was to remain aboard. I made no demur, of course, although I could not help wondering whether or not the comfort of the yawl would compensate for the torture to an ear as sensitive as mine, of two such voices as those of Le Grand and the girl, Réné.

There being nothing more to say, I wished them good morning, and got into my boat. As the little darky pulled me toward the shore, there was wafted across the water a fantastic medley of whistling, which, following some peculiar scheme of construction, was mu-

sical and yet was not.

If I had vaguely hoped for any social intercourse with my strange host and hostess I soon discovered my mistake. Le Grand went about his duties in utter silence; Réné, equally silent, assisted The girl was a constant source of wonder to me. She anticipated every order in the handling of the yawl, and went gracefully and strongly about its execution. In spite of her silence, however, her eyes were sufficiently communicative. At times their fulness of expression seemed to equal speech. I suspected her silence to be purely acquired, not habitual.

But, although few words were spoken, my strange crew seemed to have a system of communication. Often when below, I would hear from the deck a series of the sweet but baffling sounds which had already puzzled me. Sometimes these would be answered, but oftener not. On the other hand, old David and the boy, June, were forever trilling and piping in the galley forward of the saloon. The intervening bulkhead partly muffled these sounds, but in spite of this obstacle they gradually conveyed to my mind the sense of a certain underlying system. One day I asked Le Grand about it.

"What is the meaning of all of these odd snatches of whistling about the vessel?" I asked. "Have you a system of signals among yourselves?"

An ugly expression darkened Le Grand's features, and Réné, who was at the wheel, leaned forward with a

frightened look.

"Yes," answered Le Grand shortly, "we have a few signals—like those of a bosun's pipe on a man-of-war." He looked at me suspiciously, as if challenging my acceptance of his statement. Réné's beautiful face wore an expression of anxiety.

"Then your signals impress me asvery intricate," I answered slowly; "especially those employed by your ne-

groes.

A quick glance passed from father

to daughter.

"I have been studying out some harmonics on the violin," mumbled Le Grand, in his disagreeable voice. "Some of them seem to have stuck in the heads of the negroes; you know the race has a retentive ear."

"Are you yourself a composer?" I

asked.

"I cannot claim as much as that," he answered, with a shade of irony. "I am interested in the mathematics of harmony, and the guitar and violin are simply tools for testing my theories."

This was as much as I could learn. From that time the whistlings in the galley ceased; but sometimes, when I was below, I would catch a few vague notes from the deck, and these were low, sweet, with the infinite pathos and lingering cadence of some of our deepforest birds. I soon learned to distinguish Réné's notes from those of her father, for the girl's were musical, whereas Le Grand's were hard, cold, and metallic.

For a fortnight we cruised about the cays, sailing and fishing. Le Grand, as my hireling, served me faithfully and well, but that was all. With Réné, however, I soon made friends, employing the same reserved tactics which one should employ with sensitive children. After her first shyness was overcome, she grew communicative, and would talk with me freely in her muffled, untuneful voice. She told me that they were French, and that her father had once been a teacher of music in Liège,

but that they had emigrated to New Orleans when she was a young child. She had been well educated in a convent school.

One day I asked her if she was fond of music. A puzzled look crossed her

beautifully expressive face.

"I do not know," said she. "I thought that I hated it, but the day that you played upon the violin it seemed to wake something inside me. I have never heard music like that before,"

"But your father plays," said I.

"Yes," she replied, "but his playing is cold and perfect, and everything in it is quite easy to understand—like—" she hesitated, and, seeing my eyes upon her, the color rose in her cheeks.

"Like what?" I asked.

"Oh-nothing," she answered, in confusion.

"But you play yourself, do you not?"

I asked.

"Not often," she replied. "Father would not permit me to be taught any instrument at school, as he wished me to learn by his own method. Since we have lived on this yawl I have played sometimes on the violin, but he will only allow me to play such music as he plays—and"—her voice rose with a gust of passion—"those things I hate and despise!"

"But you liked my playing?" I

asked.

"Ah—your playing is different." Réné's eyes began to glow, and her cheeks grew slightly pale. "Your playing does not tell of things in cold words, but makes one dream of the things that you are dreaming of." She leaned toward me, lips parted, and her lovely face flushed, while her raucous voice seemed to belie her beauty. "Yours is the first real music that I have ever heard."

For many days following, Réné and I were constantly together, fishing and sailing in one of our boats when at anchor. Gradually it came about that the calamity of her dreadful voice, instead of repelling me, as at first, aroused in me a protective sense, as if to shield her from some undeserved affliction. There was never a more joy-

ous, sympathetic, light-hearted companion than Réné, once she began to emerge from the depressing influence of her father. Her warm, live beauty was a continual delight. I do not think that we talked very much when together, but conversation was not needed when with Réné: there was response enough in the flash of her eyes, the alternating color of her cheeks, and her graceful, expressive gestures.

I had been almost a month aboard the vawl before I touched the violin again; then one evening, after a day spent with Réné in exploring a picturesque lagoon, the mood came upon me, and I asked Le Grand if I might play. He replied with a gesture, for the man was charv of his words. So with my eyes on Réné, I began an improvisation born of the moonlit night, the sweet, faint air, and the lapping of the waves against our bows. We were on deck, of course, but the air was quite dry, and the instrument, a very good one, held its tone. Soon I forgot the others, myself, everything, in the expression of some strange, new emotion which possessed me. As I played on, I was dimly conscious of Réné's beautiful, passionate face upturned in the moonlight, glistening with tears; yet a musician playing may be conscious of these things about him without mentally appreciating them, and so I played on, pouring out my inmost soul to the strains of the old violin.

Forward, the two negroes were listening breathlessly. I saw their eves, white and shining in the moonlight; then, in time, still playing, I turned slowly to Réné. As I did so, my eyes fell upon Le Grand. His face was set and tense, and I saw the flash of his white teeth. Then as my eyes remained upon him, I was conscious of something so cold, sneering, and sardonic in his face, that it clove through the veil of my fantasy, and roused all of my being in angry protest. I stopped, without the finale which should have come. but with a savage clash of chords which came I do not know from where. They sounded like curses after what had gone before. As I played them, I saw that Réné started and shrank back, as she might have done if I had leaped upon her father, knife in hand. Grand started also, and it seemed to me that I caught from his lips a strange, low, gurgling note.

I laid the violin upon the deck-house and walked to the rail, still trembling, nervous, and overwrought, as I always am after improvising. For a moment I stood there collecting myself, and staring down at the phosphorescent, dilating creatures swimming past beneath the surface of the cay. Presently I turned to Le Grand.

"You didn't like it," said I.

"It was masterly," he answered, in his heron's voice.

"Why didn't you like it?"

He shrugged. "Can't you guess?" he asked curiously. "Don't you really know what you were playing?"

"I was improvising," I answered heatedly.

"My faith!" muttered Le Grand, in an odd voice, "there can be no doubt

about that, eh, daughter?"

But Réné did not answer, for she had risen and walked to the taffrail, where she stood, her back turned to us. Glancing at her in perplexity, I could see her shoulders heaving in the brilliant blaze of the moon.

Puzzled and angry, I went below, and in a few moments Le Grand joined

"If I was rude," he said, in his harsh voice, "I beg your pardon."

"You were not rude," said I; "you were unsympathetic — which is far worse."

"I did not mean to be, but-but-" he seemed embarrassed. "To tell the truth, your music shows me why mine has never succeeded. Personally, I am a material musician; a scientist. You, it appears, sir, are a poet. I understand music absolutely, yet I failed. Now I am a sponger of Key West."

"To appeal to the hearts of men," said I, "music must hold something

more than mathematics."

Le Grand nodded moodily. "I believe that you are right," said he. have always held that composing was only a question of analysis, of calculation."

"You are a musical atheist," said I;
"you do not believe that music has an

immortal soul."

He turned upon me fiercely. "It is all very well for you to preach," he exclaimed, "because you have made a success; yet composer that you are, and poet that you are, I, Guillaume Le Grand, the sponger, could teach you many things about your profession! When I publish my great work on—" he stopped abruptly.

"On what?" I asked.

Le Grand snapped his jaws together. "I forget myself," he said. "I beg your pardon. I forget that I am addressing my employer, not a fellow musician."

"Even as a fellow musician," I answered curtly, "there has been nothing on my part to justify your rudeness."

"Yes, there has," said he; "but you don't know it. At any rate, I beg your pardon."

Two days after this occurrence Réné saved the lives of both of us. the yawl lay at anchor in Turtle Cay, Réné and I had taken our boat and gone for a sail. When about a mile to leeward the breeze freshened; so we decided to reef the spritsail by unshipping the sprit and lashing the peak of the sail to the mast. Réné was steering, and I had stepped forward to shorten sail, when a fresh puff struck us, heeling the boat and throwing me off my balance. Lubberlike, I grabbed at the mast, and the next moment the boat capsized, and we were both in the water.

We clung to the boat looking at each other in dismay. My own emotion was chiefly self-disgust.

"I am a fool," said I, "and I've got

you into a pretty mess."

Réné pushed back her wet hair and smiled; then she looked toward the shore, and her face grew serious.

"Could you swim that far?" she asked.

"I don't believe so," said I.

"The wind and tide are setting us off shore," said Réné, "and I doubt if we could be seen from the beach." She raised herself a trifle across the boat, and looked intently landward. "There is a man walking along the beach. I wonder if I could make him hear?"

"Not possible," said I, looking at the small, white object moving along the water's edge. The idea of the girl hoping to make her muffled, timbreless voice heard at that distance was ridiculous; even, in a way, pathetic.

"At any rate," she answered, "it will do no harm to try, before we drift

farther out."

She gripped the keel in both hands. and, with a powerful heave, raised herself from the water and climbed across the boat; it floated her easily, and for a moment she sat there astride, waiting to recover her breath. She smiled at me; then, slowly filling her lungs, she raised her chin, her lips parted. Apparently without the slightest effort, there welled out a great, clear, trumpetlike note, which rose higher and higher, and fuller and fuller, with all the clearness and sweetness and purity of a silver bugle, until at its crescendo, even in that great void of sea and sky, it fairly filled my ears, as I clung there at her knee. It stopped-stopped abruptly, yet musically; and Réné threw back her hair again, and, raising her graceful hands to shield her eyes, looked intently toward the shore.

"Réné!" I cried, in amazement.

"Réné!"

Réné, sitting astride the boat, looked down at me and laughed.

"He hears!" she cried, waving her arm toward the shore, "See—he has stopped! He hears, but he has not seen us yet. I will call once more, and then wave."

Again she drew in her breath, and sent another trumpetlike call ringing across the water, but this time she ran up four notes, then dropped again. Even in our danger I was more impressed by the wonder of her voice than by the hope of rescue. Nevertheless, I noticed that the figure on the beach had paused again, and was facing seaward. I tugged my handkerchief from my nocket

"Wave this," said I.

"Too small," said Réné. She smiled at me again, then reached down, and with a vigorous grip tore a square from her white serge skirt, and waved it back and forth above her head.

"He sees now!" she cried, as at that moment the man waved his hat frantically, then started down the beach on a run. At the sight, an odd emotion

welled up inside me.

"You have saved our lives, Réné," I said, my voice choking; "thanks to that marvelous voice. Where did it come from? I have never heard anything like it."

Réné smiled down at me with a wonderful sweetness of expression. There was a humid, misty look in her deep eyes which set my heart to pounding.

"It has always been there," she said.
"When I talk, my voice is like a thin trumpet; but when I call, it clears; the volume of sound seems to stretch my throat."

"It has saved our fives," I said, and took her hand. Réné leaned down toward me; her face was quite pale. Moved by some sudden emotion, I gripped the keel of the boat with one hand, and, flinging my free arm about her neck, I drew her face to mine.

That night I went on deck, and found Le Grand alone.

"Have you ever suspected your daughter of possessing a voice?" I asked abruptly.

Le Grand stared, then frowned.

"If that is a pleasantry, sir," said he, "permit me to say that it is not in the best of taste."

"Nonsense, man," said I sharply, "don't you know that some of the greatest singers have the speaking voices of

frogs?

Le Grand stared. "It is true," he admitted, "that when she was very young, she would sometimes scream in a fit of temper so that one could hear her a mile away; but as she grew older, her voice grew thick and harsh. It was partly on this account that I taught her—" he stopped.

"Taught her what?" said I.

"Taught her what you call our signal system," he answered, somewhat sulkily. "Such a voice as hers was unendurable to an ear as sensitive as mine."

"I think that you are something of a crank," said I. "In fact, you are a good deal of a crank. Because your daughter's talking voice was not melodious, you never took the trouble to investigate her singing voice. You will find

it worth looking into."

Angry and disgusted, I turned on my heel and went below. The following morning, when I was dressing, I heard Le Grand tuning his violin. A little later there came down from above the soft, wavering call which I had learned to identify as his summons to Réné. It was answered from the girl's room, and for several moments there was a rapid interchange of the peculiar signals which never failed to puzzle and excite me anew. Listening intently, I gathered in a vague way that Le Grand was ordering, Réné protesting, Le Grand insisting, Réné refusing. Finally the rapidly varying modulations became upon both sides violent, imperative, passionate to such an extent that, without absolutely understanding, I became imbued with the same emotion of sympathetic excitement which might come to one who hears a violent quarrel in a foreign language. Presently Le Grand called his violin into requisition, and never have I heard an instrument produce a more disagreeable series of sounds. While incongruous, incoherent, and contradictory to all established method, they yet possessed a certain odd, musical character and the rhythm of speech, which is arbitrary, yet obedient to certain principles.

The sounds so excited and annoyed me that I was about to bawl a request to have them stopped, when I heard Réné leave her cabin and go on deck. I was stirred to anger to hear the girl choke back a sob as she passed my door. I listened, and, after a rapid, appealing sort of solo, the violin struck the keynote; then, so closely blended as to be almost indistinguishable from the instrument, Réné's voice welled outpure, strong, full; absolutely flawless

in quality. Slowly it swelled in volume as she ascended the scale, until the very deck, acting as a soundingboard, seemed to vibrate with it. Up, up, up it went, and as it rose, still pure, true, with a sweetness beyond expression, I could hear Le Grand's hand trembling upon the bow. Réné took the final note full and clear as a flute. but with the soulful intensity of an Isolde. The next moment there was a great shout of rapture from Le Grand, and I rushed on deck to find Réné, crimson as a sunset, clasped in her father's arms, while the tears gushed from his eyes.

Le Grand was like a crazy man; to find that this daughter, whom he could not endure to have speak, was possessed of a voice which his musical training told him to be phenomenal, seemed to rob the man of his senses. From Réné he rushed to me, whom I believe he would have embraced also, if I had not shoved him somewhat roughly aside. I walked to Réné, who was standing flushed and downcast; and Le Grand followed me babbling

foolishness.

I laid my hand on the girl's shoulder, and turned her toward me.

"Open your mouth wide, Réné," I

said.

She obeyed in surprise. I uttered an

exclamation of wonder.

"Come here!" I called to Le Grand. He came dumbly, and I took Réné's round chin between my thumb and forefinger, and turned her astonished face

to her parent.

"Look here," said I. "Did you ever see an arch like that—and such a throat? See where the pillars of the fauces are placed! Of course, her voice is muffled when she talks, just as a bugle would be if blown too low. You are a very great fool, Le Grand! Thank you, Réné—"

I loosed her chin and walked away, for the folly of this man, who claimed to be a brother musician, vexed me for the moment to the point of common,

every-day profanity.

From that hour Le Grand under-

took the training of his daughter. There were lessons and lessons, and Réné seemed daily to gain in control of her wonderful voice.

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"Before long," I told her, "you will, no doubt, learn how to contract the muscles of your throat so as to sweeten the quality of your speaking voice. It has already lost much of its harshness."

Réné turned to me slowly; she smiled, and the misty look crept into her deep eyes; then, without speaking, she pursed up her pretty lips, and voiced her answer in a soft, low note of such thrilling sweetness that it made me catch my breath. It was the note by which some forest warbler calls its mate. Réné smiled again, then turned away.

Lately the whistlings in the galley had recommenced; old David and the boy, June, were voluble as ever. Le Grand, in his instruction of Réné, appeared to communicate his wishes entirely upon his violin, and slowly and without my consciousness many of these sounds became intelligible to me.

One day an odd thing happened; we were becalmed on our course from Rum Cay to Nassau, and I was drowsing in a hammock swung beneath an awning. I was only half-asleep. Suddenly it seemed to me that Réné asked me if there was anything that I would like to have.

"Nothing, thanks," I answered, and roused myself with the echo of a soft, lingering note in my ears. Réné was standing at the foot of the hammock, her baffling smile upon her lips.
"Did you speak?" I asked drowsily.

"Did you speak?" I asked drowsily.
"Yes," said she, "in the way that I

speak to my father."

"You mean that you whistled?" I asked, in surprise. Réné nodded. "What did you say?"

"I asked if you wanted anything and you understood, and answered me in the same way."

I stared at her stupidly, but she

laughed and left me.

One night while we were lying in Nassau, Réné and I were left alone on the schooner. This was in the sixth week of our cruise; and meanwhile my

nervous prostration had become a thing of the unpleasant past. I ate and slept like a sailor, and had rather added to my normal weight and strength. There was no longer any honest excuse for my idling, and I had regretfully decided to get back to work again.

Réné was to return with me to New York, where I was to place her under the proper tuition, until Le Grand could sell his vessel and a little property which he owned in Mobile. Then he proposed to take the girl to Paris.

Réné and I were sitting on deck. It was a still evening, and the soft night breeze was sweet with the odor of orange-blossoms, as if fanned out from the island. I had been playing one of Schumann's songs.

"Réné," said I, laying down the violin, "our cruise is almost over."

Réné did not answer, and turning to her in surprise, I saw that her face was very pale against the dark, velvety background.

"So it is," she answered, and there was a throaty tremor in her voice which stirred me. "You must go back to your work—but you care more for that than for anything else!" There was a passionate intensity in her voice. "Your future is brighter than mine,

Réné," I answered gently.

René laughed, and all of the old harshness came back into her voice.

"Perhaps. You will work yourself to death, of course; men of your sort always do! You are not ice and iron, like my father—and I will have to work all day and sing all night, and if I am successful, be a slave to my voice—" her words trembled. "Ah!" she cried, "I wish that we had drifted out to sea together on that little boat."

"My dear child, now why do you wish such a thing as that?" I cried protestingly. Réné turned on me swiftly, her eyes glowing in the dusk.

"I am not your dear child!" she answered passionately; "and I will tell you why I made that wish, if you like."

She sprang to her feet, and, picking up the violin, ran the bow across the strings. I had never before heard her

play; when I had asked her, she had always smilingly refused. Now, with her eyes glowing at me through the dusk, she played softly while I listened in amazement, for, as plainly as if she had spoken the words, the instrument was telling me a story, and the story was that of Réné's life.

The odd, tremulous crotchets and quavers which had so puzzled me, the birdlike lilt, the swift, elided transitions which had impressed me as so Oriental, all were present, yet blended with a motif sweet as the love-song of fair-The cold, tuneless, mechanical signal method as practised by Le Grand was absent, yet its substance was there, and gradually, as Réné poured out through her music the story of her lonely childhood, and after it another story, which seemed to tell itself, free of her volition, I understood. A great wonder and awe came over me: a wonder which for the moment eclipsed, I am ashamed to say, the emotion awakened by a confession to which my own heart so eagerly responded.

The system of Le Grand was more than a system; it was a language; a language far more generous than the known languages, which are dependent on integral words and clauses. man had evolved a complete musical interpretation of thought by some system which I had yet to discover, but the application of this I had learned by induction. I had learned it just as the two negroes had learned it, and now I knew that Réné, in this wondrous speech, was telling of her love, but was telling it in the poetry of music, as a lover would use the poetry of words. I realized that in the same way I had told her of my own love without knowing what I said.

Le Grand and his science were forgotten, as Réné with a sob laid down her violin. I sprang to my feet.

her violin. I sprang to my feet, "Réné——!" I cried, "I understand—I know!"

"Yes, sir, it is true," said Le Grand.
"All of my life I have been working at
this theory, and it is sound, although it
is not practical, because comparatively

few people have the ear to distinguish the fine gradations of tone demanded by a musical speech. The whole is here"-he took from his desk a packet "It is all of voluminous manuscript. subject to mathematical analysis; it has its laws of syntax; it is subject to parsing; it is built up of sound combinations almost unlimited in their geometrical progression. In some ways it is analogous to spoken language, but it is more accurate, and formed of the combination of different tones, instead of clumsy linguals, labials, dentals, and Spoken languages turn to it for aid in their inflection."

"It is marvelous "I cried. "Have you quite perfected it in practise?"

"Myself and Réné have practised it perfectly," he answered. "Others but crudely. The negroes' control of it is partial, amounting to scarcely more than signals, as you used to say—but so is their spoken speech similarly limited, for that matter. Yes, it is a wonderful discovery—but useless—and," he added wearily, "it has ruined me."

"It will still make your name fa-

mous!" I cried.

He shook his head, then smiled, and held out his hand.

"And so you wish to marry Réné? It is no surprise to me—nor to her,"

he added, smiling at my expression. "You told your love-story in the most barefaced manner two weeks ago with the violin; told it largely in my own language, much of which you had picked up unconsciously. You told it very beautifully, I will admit, although your accent was open to criticism, and therefore displeasing to me as the father of this language. That was the lack of sympathy on my part of which you complained so bitterly, and for which," he added, with another smile, "you cursed me so violently in the same language at its conclusion."

Réné and I are married now, and if I were to tell you her stage name, you would recognize her as the great prima donna which she has become. Le Grand, poor fellow, is dead. At his request we are publishing his book under his own name.

So there exists to-day a language, a rich and wonderful language, which, according to the later theories of Le Grand, is the parent of all spoken tongues. There are only two people in all of the world who are fully versed in this marvelous speech, and are able to employ it freely, and do resort to it—for a certain sacred purpose. These two are Réné and myself.

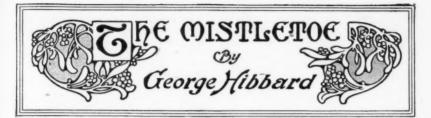


RECLUSE TO WANDERER

THROUGH winter's dull forgetfulness I stay,
With windows closed and doors that deny sound;
In patient peace I wear the days away,
Nor chide that in chance trifles they abound.
But with the waxing warmth, casements of mine
I venture to unbolt and open wide,
Since, calling far from meadows of sunshine,
Familiar stirrings thrill on every side.
I mourn not memories of younger springs,
Brought back with birds and little half-blown leaves;
I have no hunger for departed things;
The shadow of past springtimes never grieves;

Sharper to bear, comes, swift to pierce me through, A joy, like reaching out my hands to you.

MARY ALMEE GOODMAN.





HE was exactly three feet and eight inches tall. His important height amounted to four feet and two inches. She was seven years old. Five more years marked his advanced age.

Her white, fluffy skirts just skimmed her knees. His knickerbockers-of the very black stuff of grown-up evening dress-reached no farther than his. Her locks fell loosely from a ribbon about her head, which met in a big pink butterfly at the top. His hair was brushed with careful masculine severity. Both had gloves. She wore hers with a proud unconscious consciousness. The tightness of his appeared seriously to embarrass him. The whiteness proved clearly disconcerting. Her rosetted slippers terminated the pink silk stockings, and as she sat, stuck out at an abrupt angle. The brilliant pumps from which his black legs rose, managed to rest, although uneasily, on the floor.

Beyond, through the door, were other little boys and girls-numbers of them -all clad in equally festal raiment. Some were dancing; others were gathered in agitated groups; a few were seated together. At the end of the big hall was the despoiled Christmas tree. with the lights still shining brilliantly. All the dazzling frippery gleamed and twinkled. The gifts, though, were gone, but the scattered ribbons and wrappings proved how numerous they had been. Indeed, all about the place, on tables and chairs they were piled in multicolored confusion.

The time was fully half-past nine. The party was at its height. Supper was finished. The lemonade had flowed like - everything. The board had groaned beneath huge mounds of the roseate ice-cream. Great piles of the whitest cake, with the most fairylike frosting in the biggest chunks, had fairly covered the tables. The first constraint was completely gone, and confusion reigned. Through the racket of small voices, the hubbub of clamorous laughter, the belated pop of a cracker sounded now and then. Against the girl's curls, on the boy's militarybrushed locks, rested recklessly the fantastic tissue-paper hoods and caps and Formality had been forgotten. Carefully learned ceremony had been abandoned. The place was a romping playground.

"Will you dance with me?"

She asked him timidly, yet in the raised voice of high excitement. She would never have dared to do it at another time. She was, however, carried beyond herself by the light, color, music, and general feeling of festivity. until almost thoughtlessly, quite impulsively, she ran up to him. He, leaning against the doorway with an impressive coolness and indifference, had been regarding the scene somewhat gloomily. In spite of his sense of superiority-indeed, from that very reason-he was feeling "out of it." could afford to look down on the whole thing, and was availing himself of the chance. But he was a little shy and embarrassed for all his nonchalance; and, though he did not realize it, he was angry with himself and, further, constrained, just because he was angry. Therefore, when she spoke he had nothing to say. He felt vaguely she was such a very little girl that his dignity required that he should refuse her request. He did not see very well, however, how the code of etiquette permitted him to do it. Reluctantly he stepped forward. His hands and feet seemed singularly in the way. He was conscious that he was turning ridiculously red.

"Isn't it perfectly beautiful?" she confided, as they broke into a halting

waltz. .

How she admired him! With what abject adoration she was accustomed to regard him from afar! He was the tallest of all "the boys." He was so old that he no longer played with little The big brownstone castle in which he dwelt faced across the avenue the great gray stone renaissance château which was her home. As they had always known each other, he had always accorded her some notice. In the kindest way he allowed her to chase stray balls at tennis. In the winter he would push her into a snow-bank in the friendliest manner. He could run faster, throw more strongly, climb better than any of the rest. He even jumped his pony. Sometimes the chauffeur let him take the wheel of the big Gaillard.

Still, she was now much more composed than he. At a "party," in a ball-room, her baby, feminine nature felt more at home. The small soles of her satin dancing-shoes were now on her native heath. On the skating-pond she was his slave. Here she naturally assumed a more independent position.

"Yes," he answered, almost shyly, as

they shuffled on.

Čertainly he did not dance well. With a sigh she was obliged to confess it to herself. Yet this did not at all detract from the reverence with which she regarded him. With ready adaptability she converted this shortcoming into a merit. He did so many things well; and dancing, after all, was really for girls. Besides, she vaguely felt such unbounded confidence in him that she decided that if he did not excel in this, the excelling was not worth while—

that if he did not do it, then this was not worth the doing. Other little ladies of more inches and greater years have argued quite as instinctively in the same manner, and arrived at perfectly similar and wholly satisfactory conclusions.

"Let's sit down," she urged sud-

denly.

He acquiesced with readiness. They happened to have paused before a deepcushioned recess under the stairs. The wide steps mounting upward formed a large, secluded nook; almost a small room in which any one was almost hidden away. No chairs were near, and this was the only place of rest. She sat down confidently. He placed himself beside her, very erect, and very much on the edge of the low, long divan.

"Oh, I'm so warm," she cried, fanning herself vigorously with her little gloved hand. "Oh, isn't it fun?"

"Ye-es," he agreed slowly; "rather,"
"Of course," she hastened on, lending herself speedily to the supposed
masculine point of view, "it's not so
much fun as skating or tobogganing or
snowballing."

"Or hunting," he said abruptly.
"No—or hunting," she replied, in prompt agreement, striving to convey by the tone of her voice an impression of complete comprehension.

"That's what I'm going to do," he announced, aroused and absorbed by

the topic.

"What?" she asked with bated breath, for she was awed by finding herself the object of his confidences.

"Hunting," he replied determinedly. "Of course there aren't any Indians to fight and kill any more," he continued regretfully. "But there are places left yet that are just as wild, and where things happen. Where you might be eaten by a bear, or a wildcat might pounce on you from a tree, or you might get caught out in a blizzard and frozen, or you might lose your way and starve if there wasn't any game, or your canoe might upset in a rapids, and you might be drowned."

He announced this list of attractions

avidly, and paused abruptly when he could think of no more. She clasped her little fingers and opened her small mouth at the same moment.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, too thrilled for

words.

"I shot a moose once," he continued, carried away by the subject. He had lost much of the feeling of uncomfortableness, finding himself on ground where he was more secure. With her unmistakable interest, through her encouragement, he was talking almost eagerly and naturally.

"Did you?" she asked clearly, un-

achievement.

"I did," he asserted, while in her small feminine soul she realized that she had not proved equal to the occasion, and suffered. "'Way up in Canada. We've got a camp up there, and when father goes he takes me. One day we were out with two guides, and stole up-and stole up-for there was a moose, and they can smell. There isn't anything they can't smell, no matter how far off it is. Then I saw something move in the bushes, laughed low, and took a rifle from one of the guides and gave it to me, and told me to fire, while he and the other guide stood ready behind to fire, too, as soon as I had fired. Ow!"-he rubbed his shoulder. "The gun kicked. I was most knocked down. Then I heard a smashing, and father yelled out: 'Why, he's hit it.' And I had. And they killed it, and I've got the horns now. Big"-he held his short arms apart-"oh, big as that. Bigger. One, two, three, four times bigger.'

"Oh!" she cried, staring at him in round-eyed wonder and admiration, overcome by the nature of the recital.

"An' when I get older I'm going up

there to live and hunt."

"Oh, take me with you," she implored, with a sudden inspiration. "I want to go, too, please."

"You?" he commented, looking down scornfully upon her from his greater

height. "You'd be afraid."

"No, I would not," she answered confidently. "Not if you were there."

"'Course, I'd do what I could," he replied, not untouched by the flattery of the speech. "But I'd have to go off to hunt; an' there are Indians yet, sometimes. An' the dark would frighten you. An' the wild animals and snakes."

She shuddered, perceptibly daunted by the prospect. She shut her eyes for an instant. During a moment the toes of her short slippers twisted unsteadily. Then with heroic determination she looked at him and gasped:

"I don't care; I want to go with you,

anyway.'

"You might cook," he replied, regarding her with doubtful approval. "Can you?"

"Tve made pancakes," she answered.
"On the toy range in the nursery. They generally burnt up black," she added, with sorrowful truthfulness.

"Pancakes!" he exclaimed readily. "They always have 'em in the woods. Flapjacks they call 'em. An', of course, out of doors it doesn't make much dif-

ference what you eat."

"Oh, may I come?" she cried, ecstatically catching with womanly instinct the note of permission in his voice. The plan seemed to hold too many brilliant probabilities to be true. She never took her eyes from him, as she sat trembling and in silence waiting for his decision.

"An' you could sew," he said thoughtfully. "There are things to be fixed up. An' sometimes in the books

there's a girl."

The suspense seemed for her too great to be borne. The waiting for the verdict almost beyond human endurance.

"May I, please?" she pleaded.

"Why, yes, I guess so," he granted easily, and with an air of royal gen-

erosity.

She took a sudden breath. She raised her eyes in deep thankfulness. Involuntarily he gazed in the direction in which she had accidentally looked. They saw it together. Suspended by a scarlet ribbon, the green bunch with the white berries hung directly over their heads. He read in her glance her comprehension of what it was. He red-

dened in sudden panic. Her joy was uncontrollable. With the same impulse that would have led her to communicate her feeling to her doll she turned. Spontaneously she cast her small arms about his neck. Her soft lips were for an instant pressed firmly against his cheek.

He drew back in horror.

"People do, under the mistletoe," she

explained serenely.

As she caught sight of his expression she shuddered. He was peering about with consternation and anger written in his countenance. What if any of the boys had seen? Kissed by a girl! Could any ignominy be greater?

"You-you-stop," he exclaimed lamely and huskily, rising to his feet as if he were afraid she might repeat the

performance.

"People often do," she explained piteously. "And I'm so glad I'm going with you in the woods."

"But you aren't going," he said intemperately. "I wouldn't have you for anything in the world. What do you think you'd do in the woods? Kissing?" he exclaimed, with low and increasing contempt. "Kissing!"

She gave him one appealing glance. He stood stern and unvielding. Uncompromisingly, he turned away. She, acknowledging the justice of her doom, buried her face in a cushion, the tears welling in her eyes.

II.

He was twenty-eight now. She was twenty-three. He stood fully six feet and an inch high. She was five feet and seven inches-five feet and seven inches of demure, illusive, subtle young womanhood. Now her silken skirts flowed about her feet and trailed a little as she walked or danced. The tails of his accurately fitting evening dress coat fell as the mode of the day demanded, nearly half-way down his long Her ball gown was a tinted marvel, from which her bare arms and neck emerged gleamingly. His white waistcoat girthed a slender, athlete's waist, and rose to an athlete's broad shoulders. Her hair, in a dark mass stood high above her low forehead-a glorious diadem. At the back, the curls were gathered up in soft, intricate convolutions. His locks were even shorter than of yore. She, reclining in supreme composure, fluttered a fan to and fro negligently. He contorted the gloves which he held between his

strong, browned fingers.

They sat in the semi-isolation and semi-darkness of the upper landing. The music in languid strains mounted to them. Sometimes the shifting of dancing feet could hardly be heard through the murmurous hum of voices. The smell of the roses decorating the place, the scent of the flimsy mass by her side, filled the air. The festooned greens marked the season. Christmas wreaths and garlands were drawn or hung over all. Against the pane of the uncurtained window the snow was piled. The contrast of the clear black night made the warmth and brilliancy, the color and perfume, the whole gay scene the more entrancing. The hour was long after midnight. Here and there on the white crash of the floor, shreds of lace, wisps of tulle showed the pace that the dancing had been going on. The chairs were pushed farther and farther back, until the whole hall was a noisy, merry torrent of revelers flowing in the wild current of a two-step. The pace was fast and furious. Soon the cotillion would commence with the frolic of figures and favors, madder than all the rest.

He leaned forward, looking eagerly at the rosy ear, the curve of smooth cheek; for, as she half-turned away, these were all that he could see. He craned toward her as she swayed slightly from him. With a deft movement, she withdrew a gauzy fold of her robe, which brushed lightly against him. A moment before they had halted at the foot of the stairs. Just aside from the stampede of the dancers they stood.

"Come up there for a moment," he begged, with a note of anxious entreaty, nodding toward the darkened recess above.

"They will begin in a minute," she

resisted. "See! some of them are taking their places."

"Please!" he insisted. "Only for a

minute."

She did not appear to hear his words. She touched one hand lightly against the back of her hair, patting a stray tress. She carefully inspected a button of her glove. She nodded swiftly to some one across the room.

"Come," he implored.

"There isn't time," she declared, still turning slowly and dragging herself up the steps laggingly by his side.

He had not seen her since the sum-Then they had staved together at the big Canadian camp-which, with all its spreading buildings and full equipment, was really an encampment. There they had met every day-morning, noon, and night. He had looked upon her across the flowers of the breakfast-table, the first thing in the early hours, as she sat as fresh and sweet as one of the flowers themselves." He had beheld her as in bathing-suit she stood poised for a dive into the clear lake. He had viewed her as she emerged dripping, laughing and prettier than ever, with the water only twisting a more distracting ripple into her curly hair. He had observed her as in the glowing sunlight she knelt paddling the canoe, swinging her polished, sunburned arms, or stood, rod in hand, throwing a line, while the dazzling glow showed the more perfectly her flawless complexion. He had studied her as she had swayed languidly in a hammock in the moonlit darkness, the soft light rendering her pensive face more mysterious and marvelous. He had followed her hither and thither. Eager to do this or that for her-to fetch or carry. A glance-a smile-the merest word was reward enough. Not that she was prodigal of them. In their rarity he could count them. On Monday morning she had looked gratefully at him for giving her a glass of water. At four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon she had for an instant beamed bewilderingly on him as he bent back the branch of a tree, so that she might more easily pass, as they were walking

in the forest. At seven on Thursday evening she had thanked him gracefully for tramping back three miles and bringing her a handkerchief which she

had dropped.

Then, as the end of the stay drew near, she appeared to avoid him. The opportunities he had for speaking to her alone grew mysteriously fewer and fewer. Other men—one man in particular—occupied the greater part of her time. He had fumed and fretted. He had grown restless and distracted. Was she avoiding him on purpose, knowing what he wished to say? He could not doubt it. The last evening before he went settled the question in his mind. She had not come down at all

Now when he had seen her in the ballroom, all that he had felt had come back precipitately. The indifference which he had been trying to cultivate with a three months' run in Europe fell from him. He went forward to greet her as eagerly as if there had been no parting. She received him gladly, but with perfect calmness. In the intermittent occasions of the dance they had spoken merely of indifferent things. Now they were ensconced in the window enclosure-at last, alone, the propinguity of the others giving them in their disregarded separation a greater sense of isolation. His momentary silence was not the silence of uncertainty. His bent brow and tense lips showed that his mind was fully made up. Rather was the pause the quiet which came before the storm. The chiffon at her breast rose and fell more rapidly and tremulously.

At that exact moment—at the same instant they both caught sight of it. Squarely over them it swung. From the low wooden paneling it was suspended—the pale-green spray with the clustering white, waxy fruit. Only a few feet above it dangled, held by the scarlet band. With startled swiftness she averted her eyes, and at once became oblivious of it. He viewed it for an instant with grim seriousness.

"You avoided me," he said in a low, firm tone. "You ran away from me."

"What do you mean?" she whis-

pered.

"You know," he urged decidedly. "And you know what I wanted to say up there in the woods, only you would not let me."

"Oh, how nice it was," she interposed in trepidation. "Could anything have been more delightful? I always

love out of doors."

"So do I. So I did always." He glanced up at the sprigs, and, as she could not see, his face smiled a little.

"Do you remember," he continued suddenly, "that we used to talk about camping—a very different kind of camping out—when we were children?"

"I'm not sure," she replied, with

doubtful assurance.

"And-hunting," he added.

"No," she declared, with agitated

certainty.
"I do," he continued slowly. "You were going with me, and going to cook and sew, if I am not mistaken."

She stole the swiftest look at him. Evidently she was satisfied by her brief inspection of his impassive countenance.

"I do recollect some such childish fancy," she laughed, "You don't recollect anything else about our infantile ideas?"

She was staring straight at him with

a proud, challenging look.

"No," he replied thoughtfully. "I don't think that I do—at this moment."

She gave a sigh of satisfaction. She even vouchsafed one of her rare, approving smiles. Really, he was to be trusted, and the comfortable feeling that a man may be relied upon to do the right thing and not do the wrong one, counts with a girl or a woman quite as much, in a way, as her recognition of the existence of all the cardinal virtues and the most of the heroic qualities.

"How foolish we children were," she

said lightly.

"I'm not sure," he answered. "Everything seemed so simple then, and now everything is so difficult. I wish—"

He paused.

"I know my life is a very easy one,"

he went on. "Everything is cut out for me, if a little dried. I've gone into the business, and all I've got to do is to follow it steadily. There will always be plenty of money, and—everything. There is not the least chance for wild possibilities. I might say that the romance was out, if—if—"

Still she did not speak.

"If it were not for-you," he hurried "As it is, I have more to hope for and dream about than ever before. Whether the hopes and dreams may be realized rests with you. What I've been through, since the summer, you don't know. I hurried off to Europe. I hurried over the old familiar ground again. No sooner was I in a place, than I felt the desire to be out of itthe need to be moving. Whether I was flying from something or pursuing something, I did not understand. Perhaps there was a little of both. Now I .know that the reason why I could not be at rest was because I was following -you. Even when I was traveling away from you, I was insensibly trying to journey to meet you. The influence that led me forward was only the desire to turn and seek you. Now I have come back. Now I have found you. Now I am with you. Now you must hear me."

Her head drooped lower and lower. Her fingers, which had played nervously with her fan, were still. She sat in absolute quietude—unencouraging and unresponsive. He stared down at her slight, motionless' figure. He drew a deep breath. The moment had come. He could expect no help from her. He must make the move. He must take the leap in the dark. He must stake all

on the blind throw.

"I love you," he said, in a voice he could hardly have recognized as his own.

Yet she was silent. ,

"I loved you this summer," he hurried on more readily; "when you would not let me say so."

"I—I was afraid," she murmured.
"I must have loved you always," he continued intrepidly. "That is the way it seems to me. I love you now."

Still no sign. He drew himself nearer. As he turned, with the change of position his eye again caught the dangling scrap of the mistletoe over their heads. In an instant his arm was about her. He held her clasped against him. Bending forward, he spoke with his lips close to her ear.

"You sha'n't escape this time. The mistletoe must help me. I love youlove you. I want you to marry me so that I may love you always."

His lips brushed her cheek as her head bent away.

"You mustn't," she said gently.
"Why not?" he exclaimed determinedly and triumphantly. "People do, under the mistletoe."

"How cruel you are." "Must I go away again?"

"No," she breathed.

"I may stay?" "No."

"Then I must be off!"

"I don't care." She paused, and if her cheek had not been against his, he could not have caught the words: "I want to go with you."



SONGS OF NEW YORK

FIFTH AVENUE AT NIGHT

IKE moonstones drooping from a fair queen's ears The pale lights seem, White gems that shimmer when the dark appears And the old dream ;-

The ancient dream that comes with every night Through the long street-The quiet and the shadows, and the light Tread of far feet.

BROADWAY

HERE surge the ceaseless caravans. Here throbs the city's heart, And down the street each takes his way To play his little part.

The tides of life flow on, flow on, And Laughter meets Despair; A heart might break along Broadway-I wonder who would care!

DOWN-TOWN

HE sun has gone, and from the ferry-boat That like a golden worm crawls through the night, I watch the myriad stars that round me float, And, cityward, the honeycombs of light.

Tier after tier they blossom in the dark, Miraculously radiant, while I Think of the toilers bent beneath each spark, And breathe a little prayer for them, and sigh. CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

The DIABOLICAL TOM CAT





N the beginning let me say that I have no antipathy toward motor-cars. They are welcome to half the road and a little more when we meet; and I am as willing to swallow their dust

as that kicked up by a farmer's team. I recognize them as a product of the times, like the trusts and the laborunions; and, far from harboring any petty jealousy, I rejoice that the prosperity of my country allows so many of my compatriots to own the machines.

But I draw the line at Mitchell's Tom Cat. That restriction is not as irrelevant as it appears, for the Tom Cat is a Panercedes touring-car, rated at forty horse-power; though Mitchell says he is certain she will develop fifty.

Mitchell calls her the *Tom Cat* because of the softly luxurious purr she emits when she is pleased, and the ungodly rumpus she kicks up when she is not. It is true that, in the English language, machinery is feminine, but "Tom Cat" seemed to fit her better than "Tabby Cat"; so Mitchell calls her "Tom," and speaks of her as "she."

He claims she is good for "forty per" when she is feeling prime; and he spends half his leisure hours in the garage pit making her feel prime by judicious application of a wrench; and the other half running the primeness out of her at "forty per."

He has painted her a salmon-pink, with purple trimmings, so that she is very majestic and satisfying, like a Parrish sunset, or the Grand Cañon of the Colorado stalled in the barn.

Mitchell loves her as though she had a reciprocating soul. In fact, I think he actually does endow her with an Ego. When she went off the road with him, and he wound up in the center of a farmer's truck-patch with a fencerail in his lap and a cabbage in each headlight, he did not blame her.

"It wasn't the *Tom Cat's* fault," he explained. "The steering-gear jammed."

In my opinion she is possessed of a devil. Her idiosyncrasies admit of no milder language. Even the odor from her exhaust seems to me, at times, to savor of sulfur. I know whereof I speak; and with all due regard for veracity, I aver that her Ego is of the diabolical variety.

You see, when August came last summer, I was a good deal run down; couldn't sleep; jumped at the snap of my own watch-case; signed my name so the bank used to telephone for verification; and all that. Doctor said "Nerves"; told me to quit smoking; and advised quiet, rest, and change. Then Mitchell turned up and invited me to take a little jaunt through three States with him in the *Tom Cat*.

I am a firm believer in the providential aspect of coincidences, and I accordingly welcomed Mitchell and his machine as my appointed conductors back to the state of nerveless health. Mitchell painted the trip in colors which smote the eye like the *Tom Cat's* own.

"We'll avoid the big towns," said he. "That will give you the quiet you need. Sitting on a padded seat with nothing to do but admire the scenery will be rest; and three States ought to constitute a change. You'll go, won't you?"

I grasped his hand. "Indeed I will," I cried.

Mitchell fell into a brown study, laying his plans.

"I'll take off the tonneau," he said.
"That will increase her speed consider-

ably. Stripped, she ought to do fifty per, I should think."

"But," said I, "we won't care to travel that fast."

"Oh, no," he agreed. "We'll be out for pleasure. But the less weight she carries the easier it is on the machinery, you know. Of course, we'll merely jog along and see the country;" and being unused to motors and the unhallowed ambitions they inspire in the hearts of men. I believed him.

It was a warm day when we made our start. Mitchell drove to my door to pick me up; and as the *Tom Cat* drew in to the curb my hypersensitive nerves told me that she leered at me diabolically with her four brass lamps.

"Stripped," she was an uncommonly vicious-looking object. Her salmonpink body suggested some ferocious animal—say a rhinoceros—skinned, while the long, sloping tail where the tonneau should have been gave her a "down-to-business" air that stirred my apprehensions.

It was too late to back out, so I mounted beside Mitchell, and watched him start her forward and swing her easily to the middle of the street. By her soft, luxurious purr I knew she must be feeling prime.

We were barely free of the city limits before Mitchell did something to her. I did not see what it was, but its effect was like kicking both spurs into a thoroughbred. She nearly jumped out from under me. My head flew back so that I feared my neck was dislocated.

"What's the matter?" I gasped when I got my breath.

"Nothing," he answered casually. "Great, isn't it?"

I clutched the seat with both hands, and hoped he could stop her before we reached a corner. I should have suggested the equivalent of sawing on the bit had I known what it was. She

struck a patch of sand, and yawed like a rudderless boat.

"Steady," said Mitchell; and actually chuckled as he set her straight.

The road in front developed a horrid fascination for me. It became, as it were, a monstrous white snake which we were swallowing a hundred yards a second. As I reckon it, that is between three and four miles a minute. Correct?

I wondered what would happen if we should strike a section of the snake which we could not swallow. It was a very interesting problem, and I decided we should probably turn wrong side out and wait for the coroner. Meanwhile Mitchell seemed not at all concerned. If the leaping, roaring Titan showed any sign of slacking up, he immediately shoved a little lever on the wheel a trifle forward, with the uniform result of stirring the devil in her to renewed exertions.

Presently we shot over the brow of a hill, and began falling down a long slope. For a man in my condition that was a terrible experience. My nerves were screwed up like fiddle-strings, as it seemed to me, ready to snap at the slightest additional strain, and leave me a raying maniac.

At the bottom of the hill I could plainly see a curve; but from Mitchell's actions I felt sure he did not. Our acceleration increased in a ratio of about four to one of the distance traversed. That mad thing spurned the solid earth. Our progress was one long ricochet. She whanged the vibrant air like a teninch shell.

"Sit tight," screamed Mitchell.

I closed my eyes. Came a wrench; a sickening twist; a sense that the hind wheels were sliding sidewise from beneath me; and I knew that my end had come.

"Rather bad spot, that," spoke the voice of Mitchell calmly.

I opened my eyes to see the straight white snake ahead, and the *Tom Cat* leaping forward like a beast of prey. I glanced behind, but the curve was hidden in a swirl of dust.

Since then I have figured out how we

rounded that corner. At the last moment Mitchell did something to the Tom Cat which caused her to leap bodily into the air. Then by wrenching on the wheel, he switched her hinder parts around, and thus turned her, exactly as a kangaroo will execute a half-turn in the air by merely swinging his tail. Of course, when we struck earth again we were round the curve, and headed straight once more.

There may be nothing plausible about that explanation; but it goes, all the same. I was there, and I know that in no other manner could the Tom Cat have rounded that corner without turn-

ing bottom up.

Seventy-eight miles from our starting-point, according to the map, we halted for luncheon. As we pulled up before the road-house, I thanked my lucky stars for two hours' respite from the "rest and quiet" of the Tom Cat.

"Weil," said Mitchell, "what do you think of it? Great sport, isn't it?" "Very-er-exhilarating," said I.

"It'll set you up again, old man. You mark my words. There's nothing like it. You won't have any nerves by the time we get back."

"No," I agreed: "I don't think I

shall."

I would have paid more money than I could afford to escape entering that devil-possessed infernal machine that afternoon. I have led a fairly decent life, and, having no one dependent upon me, I am not afraid to die; but it isn't nice to contemplate being spattered over

a public highway.

If I had had my wits about me I should have instructed my partner to send me a telegram at our first stopping-place; something ambiguous, like, "Iones case set for to-morrow," so that I could have construed it as a peremptory summons to return if I had so desired. Having neglected any such precaution, however, I could devise no means of escape.

We trundled across a long iron bridge soon after starting; and halfway over, Mitchell remarked: the other side we'll be free. The State we're leaving is a hide-bound conservative with a speed law that's a disgrace. Over here they're up to date, and we can travel as fast as we please. I want to show you what the Tom Cat can really do when she's feeling prime."

Now, then and there I should have risen up in revolt; but I lacked the moral courage. It is singular how much misery one will endure rather than be laughed at. Mitchell had a perfect right to risk his own neck if he so desired, but mine was my own private property; and if I had had the courage of my cowardice, I should have refused to go farther with him in his reckless career.

We shot off that bridge-head going, I should say, about two hundred yards a second. Seven miles a minute? Let it stand. Small in the distance appeared a farm wagon. Mitchell pressed a lever with his foot, and the "toodle-oodleoodle-oodle-doo" of our harmonic siren

sang before us.

The farmer stuck to the middle of the road. The siren spoke again, while I held my breath as we thundered down upon him. The farmer glanced back, and continued stolidly on his way, evidently preferring his half of the road out of the middle. Did Mitchell slow down? I watched eagerly for any evidence of such an intention, and detected

"Road-hog," said Mitchell, in quite the disgusted tone one might use regarding a toad or a green worm. "We'll give him a lesson."

I prepared to jump when the shock came. I did not propose to be caught between those two vehicles. It would be an awful tight place. However, ten feet from the tail-board of the offending wagon Mitchell shot the Tom Cat into the ditch; and with the wagon-hubs scraping our mud-guards, we hurtled past. Abreast of the team he turned sharply in again; and under the snorting noses of the horses let loose the siren.

I know that the farmer escaped alive, for his curses reached us as we vanished; but it seemed to me at the moment that the team had reared and fallen over backward upon him. Mitchell chuckled as he set the *Tom Cat* straight.

"Next time he'll pull out like a white

man," he remarked.

"My dear fellow," I said, in my kindest legal manner, "you ought not to do such things. They'll get you into trouble yet."

"A road-hog," said Mitchell sententiously, "is a dirty animal, and must be

treated as such."

That was perhaps our narrowest squeak that afternoon, although we ran over a dog that essayed to bark before us; and we took a reverse curve, with a bridge in the middle, at a pace which I thought must snap our tail-lamp off its bracket. When we alighted for dinner, we had come one hundred and sixty miles since morning; and Mitchell looked at me with the air of a physician.

"By George!" he cried. "You look better already. Two weeks of this will

set you right again."

I slept that night from sheer exhaustion; and dreamed of pink and purple devil-wagons flipping me shuttlelike from high spot to high spot along the undulations of interminable white snakes. Singular as it may appear, I woke refreshed.

The second day I began smoking again. I really could not see why I should stick to one part of the doctor's prescription while avoiding the balance. Rest and quiet were out of the question, and there seemed no possibility of any change for at least two weeks, so why shouldn't I smoke? Might as well die for a sheep as a lamb, I philosophized; and after breakfast accepted one of Mitchell's cigars.

We climbed a considerable mountain that day, and coasted down the other side, taking the jerky curves of the road on two wheels and our standing luck. I was glad to note that Mitchell had run the "primeness" out of the *Tom Cat* on the previous day; and that on the level she was not capable of any scandalous bursts of speed.

Night overtook us in a hot little town beset with encircling hills, which denied all hope of a saving breeze. Mitchell ran the *Tom Cat* into the local garage, and spent the evening under her. He returned to the hotel about ten with a doleful countenance.

"Get her fixed?" I said, with at-

tempted enthusiasm.

"No," he answered. "'Fraid we can't get away before noon to-morrow." I felt relieved.

The next day was a boiler. I sat in the shade of the hotel veranda watching the thermometer climb to 103 degrees, and thought of Mitchell in the garage pit under the *Tom Cat*; and was not sorry for him. At last I was getting the rest and quiet my nervous system needed.

By ten o'clock, however, the rest and quiet began to pall. I will not name that town lest I do it injury; but for concentrated rest and quiet it certainly took the rag off the bush. Not so much as a yellow dog passed down the main street for two mortal hours. I read an unfamiliar daily paper, and yearned for my own beloved sheet. I smoked to kill time and keep off the flies; and when Mitchell turned up at noon, I was glad to see him, and inquired as to the health of the *Tom Cat* with unaffected interest.

"Nothing doing," he answered; and I sat through a stifling, stagnant afternoon varied only by a trip to the garage, where I listened for a time to Mitchell's overheated remarks about gasoline machinery. They got her fixed before night, however; and when I climbed in next morning and felt her start beneath me it was with a hearty sense of relief. Rest and quiet are all right, no doubt, in small doses, but the bottle ought to be labeled: "Poison if taken in excess." That town in August was dangerous.

It was exhilarating to feel the wind in my face once more, and the spring of the machine beneath me. But when Mitchell put the spurs to her flanks, or its equivalent in the lingo of the motor, all my apprehensions burst about my ears with renewed vigor. Even Mitch-

ell was surprised.

"Say," he cried, "this is something like;" and bent forward over the wheel

with the insane enthusiasm of the speed crank.

To describe our mad, unhallowed flight is beyond my power. After a rush of protesting words which the wind whipped worthless from my lips, I lay inert, crushed bodily into the cushions by the atmospheric pressure of our

roing.

It was horrible. The slightest inequality in the road caused that salmon-colored fiend to take wings and soar like a hawk, alighting twenty feet beyond. I had a sense of giddy floating; a nausea as of seasickness oppressed my vitals; and I hereby warn humanity that the seasickness of the present will be as nothing beside the air-sickness of the aeronautic future.

There was a flurry in front, and a chicken struck me in the chest and

rolled into the road.

"Too bad," yelled Mitchell cheerfully.
"They will try to cross in front. The good Lord never made a bigger fool

than a hen."

Fortunately the road lay straight for miles. I knew that nothing but a hill could stop us, for Mitchell's speeding-blood was up; and in that condition he recks not of corners or reverse curves; while another vehicle in the narrow way merely inspires him with desire to make

it appear to be standing still.

We seemed to be forever reaching that hill, but ultimately it arrived. It was a goodly upheaval of the earth crust; and the road led straight up its slope. We struck the grade, driving like the whirlwind, and ran half-way to the top before our momentum fully died; then Mitchell threw in the low speed for the remaining climb.

"Jim," I said soberly, "you've got to quit it, or I'll have to leave you. My

nerves---"

He stopped the car instantly, for he had reached the summit.

"How'd you feel back there in the village?" he asked.

"Badly enough," I answered.

"Doctor said rest and quiet, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Bosh!" said Mitchell. "You'd die.

What you want is change of excitement. You've been trying cases till your nerves are raw. You stick to me, and I'll put 'em right for you. Here!"

He thrust a bit of paper and a pencil

at me.

"Write your name," said he; and, wondering, I complied.

The result astonished me still more. It really looked like my old signature. "Better or worse?" asked Mitchell.

"Better," said I honestly. "A good deal better."

"Put not your trust in doctors," said

Mitchell mockingly; and started the Tom Cat forward.

For ten days more I was in his hands; while the *Tom Cat* cut the very heart out of stability and order over the best part of three States. It was unrighteous and lawless, reckless and foolhardy; and I suffered many things

-mental, physical, and moral.

Continual fear of sudden, ignoble death blasted my enjoyment of much admirable scenery. Beneath me, one day, the diabolical *Tom Cat* lightly leaped the roadside ditch, passed through a barbed-wire fence; the top strand of which scored me vindictively across the stomach, and came to a standstill in a field of corn, departure from which cost Mitchell dear.

Morally, however, I suffered most. It came to pass toward the end of that fortnight, that I, a humane man, looked upon a dog more or less as a matter of small importance; and whereas, hitherto, I had always sided with the horse against the motor, behold! I found myself considering the horse as a relic of a bygone age, cumbering the motor track for yet a little while, and then to be done away with.

The dust that we raised, to settle on pedestrians, soon caused me no blush; and I returned from that trip a hardened believer in the survival of the fittest on the open road.

The *Tom Cat* failed of its evil purpose, and we arrived in safety at our

journey's end.

"How do you feel?" asked Mitchell, as he set me down at my door.

"Great!" I answered. "Got any nerves?"

"Not that I know of."

"They aren't of any use in a machine, and one soon loses 'em," said he. "We'll go again."

"Hope so," said I; and I watched the salmon-colored tail of the *Tom* Cat quiver joyously with the anticipation of further deviltry, as he drew

Now I did not enjoy that trip, and I should decline—I think—if Mitchell asked me again; but in anticipation of a possible return of nerves next summer, I am saving money to buy a duplicate of the diabolical *Tom Cat*. Which strikes me as strange.



TO A NEW-BORN BABE

WELCOME to the world, my sweet!
From the banks of Lethe's stream
To the glamour and the gleam
And the glory of the dream
Of our little life and fleet.
Welcome to the world!

Welcome to the stir of morn!
To the rising of the breeze
And the wind among the trees.
Welcome, blessed one, to these
And rejoice that thou art born!
Welcome to the world!

Welcome to thy mother's face!
Rapture of her laden breast,
None on earth, in Heaven blest,
Lie more sweetly lulled to rest
Than thyself in this still place.
Welcome to the world!

Welcome to the peace and pain;
To the ecstasy and ache;
To the toys we build to break.
Thirst of life we cannot shake,
Though we drink and drink again.
Welcome to the world!

Welcome to all faith and fear; Disillusionment and lure; To the dust that scatters sure And the soul that must endure After habitation here.

. Welcome to the world!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.





ERTAINLY not!" declared Mrs. Balmer Longstreth in a tone of finality from the doorway.

"No, indeed!" echoed Mrs. Dolliver, rising ponderously to her feet and

fumbling at the fastenings of a knit jacket that seemed to complicate her

coat.

At the call of her helplessness, Mrs. Manton Waring flew from the hearthrug to adjust both these garments satisfactorily. Then she took a long breath; and from behind the other's broad back returned to the charge. She looked straight at Mrs. Longstreth.

"But, Cynthia," she began; "it seems to me that to be exclusive is to be nar-

row-minded!"

Mrs. Longstreth waved an interrupt-

ing hand.

"Oh, don't begin again, Gussie—please!" She laughed dryly in what her sister-in-law pigeonholed mentally as "that maddening Waring way"; and resolved to call it to her husband's attention the very next time he gave occasion.

"I'm late for luncheon as it is. The sentiment does you credit," she went on; "but it sounds like a copy-book; big I, big E, big N! If you'll pardon my saying so, you don't know what you're talking about, my dear! All we ask of you is to be a charming little figurehead on the nights that the class meets; and to see that these invitation-cards are directed and sent out exactly as I have written down. It's awfully sweet of you to offer to do this; but, then, few of the rest of us have attained

to the dignity of a secretary! Leave everything else to Mary and me; and, above all things, don't begin your career"—her voice bristled with patronage—"by making the mistake of trying to introduce the names of perfectly impossible people into a list that has been properly made up. Isn't that what we

think, Mary Dolliver?"

"Yes, indeed!" echoed again the lady addressed, pounding heavily after her. From the window, Mrs. Waring watched the two as they got into a waiting brougham. She could guess the purport of the smiling words that she could not hear; and, in an unwonted consciousness of defeat, felt an exhilarating desire to shake her fist after the carriage, as it disappeared around the corner.

"I couldn't have been treated worse if I had come from Pittsburg!" she confided to her husband, later on, during an entr'acte of a dull play at which they found themselves for an evening unexpectedly free. They had left their seats, and were walking up and down the

fover.

"The whole meeting was quite spoiled for me; in my own house, too," she went on; "and all because I wanted to do something a little nice for a woman to whom I feel that I am really under obligations. Your sister. Cynthia, although you may defend her all you like, Manton, is a fearfully dogmatic person; and cousin Mary Dolliver clings to everything that Cynthia suggests, like a leech! I'd throw the whole thing over if my name wasn't on the cards. It's the Wednesday Evening Dancing Class," she explained to her husband's puzzled look; "for the girls who haven't come out yet; and the trouble rose about Mrs. Isaiah Troutmann. Yes, of course; she's the wife of 'Troutmann's Tincture'; though I must say I don't call that a very friendly way to put it when he's been dead for years! You see, I suggested asking her daughter, Rebecca, to join the class. She's known all the girls at school; and in age she's just between Cynthia's Hariot, who came out last year, and cousin Mary's twins. Rebecca's very nice, too; vellow hair and rather a turned-up nose; not at all what you'd expect! I'm sure you see her brother Jacob everywhere-he was in all the best clubs at college. But Cynthia wouldn't listen to me. The things she said! Of course, Mrs. Troutmann isn't in society in the narrow sense that your sister insists in taking the term; but she knows very good people like that fat Humphrey woman, and blind old Mrs. Rainey. Mrs. Troutmann is director of I don't know how many charitable organizations; and prodigiously rich, too. That's the real reason why they have her, I suppose, although she's an awfully nice person, anyway. I met her first at that dreadful place in New Jersey, where you insisted on my staying with cousin Carrie Abbott while you went to Paris. Mrs. Troutmann. was very civil to me then; and now I see her occasionally at the Newsboys' Club rooms. Now, don't you think-

The stroke of a warning bell interrupted her, and they hurried down the aisle. Once in her seat, Mrs. Waring gazed about the house through her glasses. Suddenly she put them down

with an amused little cry.

"Manton," she whispered, "quick, quick, before the lights go out. Look about four rows in front, to the right -with that theater-party; the one that Mrs. Tony Ellery is chaperoning. There is Cynthia's Hariot sitting next to Jacob Troutmann!"

Waring turned to catch a glimpse of his niece's brown head. She and the man beside her were talking earnestly; but the rising curtain prevented his sharing with his wife the thought that flashed through his mind.

"By Jove, this is the third or fourth time that I've seen those two young people together this week!"

II.

Mrs. Waring was fond, and, to tell the truth, a trifle afraid, of her secretary! This impoverished but still militant gentlewoman, coeval with Mrs. Waring's mother-in-law, had brought a limitless capacity for accuracy and detail to the service of the latter lady. whose schoolmate she had been. After the elder Mrs. Waring's death, the secretary descended, in accordance with a written wish, as a "sacred trust to my son's wife." Indeed, it became, as time went on, a kind of fetish with young Mrs. Waring to provide sufficient work for Miss Umbrage to do; the result was an uneven sort of a conflict between impulse and system; to the usual confusion of the former, it must be con-

Yet their relation held in it one point of real agreement, highly satisfactory to both. That was a common antagonism to Mrs. Balmer Longstreth! Miss Umbrage, as became her more subordinate position, dealt in delicate insinuation, no less telling than the other's open outbursts. Accordingly, on the following morning it was not surprising that Mrs. Waring, as she showed the secretary the boxes of cards and envelopes on her desk, and produced the neatly written pages of directions, should say in capital imitation of her

sister-in-law's tone:

"Cynthia is very particular, Miss Umbrage, to have these go out just as she has arranged; and she bids me tell you to be most exact with all the details."

Then she burst out laughing, as she

added:

"Isn't it stupid? And doesn't Cynthia seem to regard us as a pair of prize idiots?"

Miss Umbrage's thin lips stretched in a thinner smile. Then she tore the paper of directions into small pieces with marked deliberation, and arranged herself leisurely at the desk.

"Yes, I dare say she does," she spoke "Cynthia Longstreth indulgently. prides herself on the quickness and accuracy of her judgments; but don't forget that I had to deal with her long before you were born! Ah, the invitations for the Dancing Class!"-her voice changed as she took up a handful of them and shook her head reminiscently. "I suppose there are many additions to the list-new times, new manners-" she simpered pleasantly. "Do you know, I used to send these cards out for your husband's dear mother more years ago than I care to say! There was a noble, large-minded woman for you--essentially grande-dame; though Carria does resemble her in face! Between you and me, Mrs. Man-

Miss Umbrage warmed to confidences as her wrinkled hands arranged the cards in precise order. "A good many people in this town to-day owe their social start to my dear, generous friend. They rise up, to quote the Psalmist, and call her blessed. She had such a pretty way of adding just a few new names to the list every year when she was on the committee-nice people, of course, but newcomers. Not that she used her influence for her own ends; far from it. A more scrupulous woman never lived -I wish I could say that of every onebut she was large-minded, I tell you, and glad to recognize every claim."

Mrs. Waring became suddenly inter-

ested.

"Do you mean to say that new names

are added every year?"

Miss Umbrage grew judicial. "Yes, and no," she hesitated. "I can't speak positively, because Mrs. Longstreth has not seen fit to have me do the work of late; but that has been the habit in the past. A question of kindly tact, Mrs. Manton."

"Do you mean that Cynthia has added names herself?" persisted the

other

"Oh, I don't say that!" Miss Umbrage was conservative. "I shouldn't like to be quoted; but how otherwise did the Kellys get on at the Bloomfields?"

She held the book of names, and was running through the list.

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There was a moment's pause. Miss Umbrage smiled gently, as in recognition; then she took up her pen and bent to her work.

Meanwhile, in Mrs. Waring's brain had been born an *Idea!* It stirred strongly through a busy forenoon; at luncheon it uttered its first faint cry; and just before dinner it sprang forth, like Minerya of old, armed at all points

and ready for action.

For a wonder, Mrs. Waring had confided in no one. A few statements, indeed, had put Miss Umbrage in possession of the facts relating to Mrs. Troutmann: and a certain mysteriousness of demeanor had made her husband regard her with amused interestbut as she hurried to the library a few moments before dinner could be announced, she felt all the pleasant isolation of the actor who has the stage to himself. The scene lent itself admirably to her purpose. A waning woodfire glowed through the gloom; a single pink-shaded light burned on her desk: and from the room beyond came the faint notes of a waltz played on the pianola by Mr. Waring himself!

She was glad, too, that she had worn a black dinner-dress with gold spangles; it was completely in keeping with

the situation.

Yes: there were the invitations addressed, stamped, and bound by rubber bands into four neat packages. She recalled with satisfaction how she had been able to induce Miss Umbrage to leave them unposted. A moment's search in a lower drawer disclosed some left-over blanks and a box of envelopes. She abstracted one of each, dipped her pen in ink, and started to fill in the spaces on the card. Then, as a sudden desire for completeness—as becomes the artist-seized her, she set before her a specimen of Miss Umbrage's chirography. A few trials on a blank sheet of paper, thrown afterward into the fire. reduced her own large, angular handwriting to a semblance of the other's copper-plate. Just as the gong for dinner sounded melodiously and brought the pianola to a sudden stop, she had sealed and stamped an additional envelope, which she regarded with complacency as she slipped it among the rest. It bore on its fair surface the address:

MRS. ISAIAH TROUTMANN,
1727 Multiple Avenue.

Then, as she joined her husband in the hall, she spoke to the butler, who stood at the dining-room door.

"Barker," she said, "please see that the packages of letters on my desk in the library are posted at once."

III.

In due time answers began to come in, and, among them—it arrived, fortunately by the early post, before Miss Umbrage's appearance, and fell at once into Mrs. Waring's hands—was an acceptance in the name of Miss Rebecca Troutmann. In addition to the conventional form was enclosed an affectionate note from her mother. "So kind of you to think of my wee girlie," it ran; "you and dear Mrs. Longstreth! I join her name here with yours in offering my cordial thanks. Do tell her, please, that I mean to write her very soon."

As she read, Mrs. Waring's heart shivered as in the clutch of icy fingers; and she realized with sudden distinctness that henceforth the straight path was not for her!

Yet she pushed down a timorous impulse to confess all to her sister-in-law; and, resolving to pay her piper handsomely, wrote, after divers attempts, a guarded and elaborate reply to Mrs. Troutmann, in which she claimed for Cynthia a nature so modest and retiring that any expression of thanks would be out of place, and indecorous. For her own part, she resolved firmly that the two ladies should never meet. In this resolution, fortune favored her with, what seemed at first, remarkable kindness; for Mrs. Long-

streth was almost, immediately obliged to go to Lakewood with a delicate younger child. The relief at this opportune removal was, alas! short-lived. For, in her mother's absence, Hariot Longstreth seemed to spend most of her time with her aunt; and her presence seemed, somehow, to imply the simultaneous presence of young Jacob Troutmann.

He appeared either with Hariot or just behind her, at tea-time every afternoon. He telephoned whenever she happened to be there in the morning. At Hariot's suggestion, he had filled a place suddenly vacant at a dinner; he had been asked to dine at first-hand, and he had come to another dinner given in honor of Hariot. Mrs. Troutmann, too, was decidedly in evidence. She was always sending tickets to some strange concert or other, and finding a pretext for a note or a call. Waring grew almost to dread the sight of her smoothly banded black hair and her large, fat hands, knuckle-deep in rings. People were already beginning to joke with her about the Troutmanns, too, in an annoying way that she could not quite understand. She found herself all at once in the undesired position not only of their social sponsor. but, in her mother's absence, of Hariot's chaperon.

Even her far from judicial mind recognized these conditions as incompatible; and she felt a vague and increasing confusion of spirit, so out of proportion to what she had done, that she would have given a good deal to tell the situation to her husband. But, with the memory of what she had come to regard as the "fatal card" fresh in her mind, she hesitated. Strangely enough, Cynthia's return, and the necessary culmination of the plot on the first night of the class, seemed two of the most desirable things in life! And so it was not without a certain pleasant excitement-such, perhaps, as the choice of his last breakfast is supposed to stir in the breast of the condemned murderer-that just before dinner she opened its box and displayed to Miss Umbrage, delayed that afternoon with checks and accounts, the pale-blue charms of a fresh gown destined to

adorn the occasion!

Once inside of its taffeta and chiffon, however, and seated opposite her husband at the table, her mood veered and her spirits sank. She made a pretense of eating; she crumbled bread listlessly; she answered in monosyllables; she started excitedly at each stroke of the clock; and, finally, to her husband's expressed consternation, she was ready and waiting, in a mood of petulant depression, a quarter of an hour before the time for which she had ordered the carriage.

IV.

Mrs. Waring sat up in bed at the sound of her husband's step on the stairs, and called to him, through the darkness, as he passed her door. He turned on the light when he came into the room.

"What on earth's the matter, Gussie?" he asked anxiously. "Why aren't

you asleep?"

"Asleep!" his wife repeated in a tone of mournful scorn. "How can you ask that? I shall never sleep again!" Then she added quickly: "Oh, Manton, I am distressed, and worse than distressed; I'm puzzled! Come and sit by me and help me, and let me tell you everything; but first bring me one of those little scarfs on that lounge by the window, for it's frightfully cold. Not that horrid red one, stupid; but the pretty blue one with the fringe."

She wrapped the shawl about her and adjusted her long, brown braid carefully over her shoulder before she spoke again. Waring had drawn a chair to the bedside, and was regarding his wife wonderingly, with wrinkled forehead. She caught his glance mid-

armar.

"Don't look at me as if I might be dying, Manton; it makes me creepy!" she laughed nervously. "It isn't as bad as that, but it's pretty strange! Now, please don't interrupt me again, and I'll begin at the beginning.

"You see, I did something, three weeks ago, that I don't suppose I should have done. I sent, on my own hook,

Mrs. Troutmann's daughter a card to Wednesday Evening Dancing Class! I didn't tell even you, Manton: and Cynthia never knew a thing about it. It's made me lots of trouble-trying to keep them apart-Mrs. Troutmann and Cynthia, I mean. And of course I had to let Hariot bring young Troutmann here all the time her mother was away, when I felt that Cynthia would disapprove; though he's really a dear boy. But that is an old story. Manton, and I'll tell you about it another time. What really troubles me now is the extraordinary thing that happened to-night. You noticed how little I ate at dinner, though I tried to choke things down to deceive youoh, I've learned a great deal of deceit the past three weeks, Manton; I wonder you can speak to me-and how I hurried away early? It was because I wanted to get to the hall ahead of Cynthia-she came home from Lakewood only this afternoon-so as to be there when the little Troutmann girl arrived. Oh, I don't know what I intended to do, Manton! I did get there, more dead than alive, at ten minutes past eight. The class begins at halfpast. There were just three or four giggling girls in the dressing-room; horrid little pigtailed things, with plates on their crooked teeth-vou know the age? And two gawks of boys squeezing into their gloves in the hall-

"At twenty minutes past eight, cousin Mary Dolliver appeared; such a sight as she was; though I must say she diverted me somewhat, for I had to plan quickly not to stand next to her if I could help it. I had on my new blue gown, you know; and she wore a dreadful kind of bright green satin. She suggested immediately that we should take our places in the receiving-line; and just then Cynthia joined us, rather distraite, it seemed to me, but looking very well, I must say, in black, though her nose was a good deal burned by being out of doors in Lakewood, I suppose; and she thinks it's fast to use

powder!"

Mrs. Waring laughed softly to her-

self, and paused to arrange a pillow more comfortably at her back.

"The next few minutes," she went on, "were most awkward on account of the way the colors of our gowns clashed. Any one would tell you that Cynthia, in black, ought to have stood in the middle, between blue and green. Indeed, I suggested, very modestly it seemed to me, that I should stand nearest the door-you see, I wanted to be there so as to nab little Rebecca Troutmann when she appeared—with Cynthia next and cousin Mary at the end. I told them they could consider my place the foot of the line if they wanted to. I can't see how it made any differanyway! Of course they wrangled; and of course Cynthia had her own way, as usual. I could have cried, only I needed all my wits about me; and I really had no time to think before the children came.

"I must say it was rather interesting to see them. There were a few mothers among them, too; and just fancy, Mrs. Tony Ellery brought her knitting! Evidently she's trying the domestic pose. The knitting-work was a waist-coat; but I'll be willing to wager it

isn't for her husband!

"All of a sudden, Manton, as I strained my eyes in that directionyou may imagine how nervous I was by this time-I saw the little Troutmann girl come through the doorway. She is a sweet, little light-haired thing, as I told you, with a retroussé nose. I stepped out of line and hurried forward; but Cynthia had seen her, too, and-I could scarcely believe my eyes -instead of glaring at her, as I had supposed she would, in that horrible freezing way, her face was positively wreathed in smiles. She took both the child's hands in hers and called her 'Becky, dear'; and then, Manton Waring, she actually kissed her! But worse was to follow! For, when Mrs. Troutmann loomed behind her daughter-I really hadn't supposed that she'd come -Cynthia bent forward and kissed her, too; in that affected, twice-on-eachcheek fashion. I think that she must have called her by her first name, too, for I distinctly heard her say, 'Dear Sapphira!' I couldn't bear it—it was all so incomprehensible; and I felt my jaw dropping and my eyes popping out of my head. So I got away to the dressing-room as quickly as I could, and flew home. I've been waiting hours for you. Where have you been? I can't live till I understand this thing. So tell me, if you can, what has happened to your sister Cynthia? What does it all mean, Manton Waring?

"This is a joke!" he cried; "but by the merest chance I can explain it. It has its serious side, too! Why, it means that Cynthia has been more than a match for you again, little girl. It means that you gave her, you intriguing innocent, just the chance she needed tonight to justify herself to her world. Poor Cynthia! she was hard pressed, Gussie! John Longstreth came in just after you left and told me the whole story. He wanted me to help him keep it out of the newspapers, if we could; and I think we've succeeded. You see, Gussie, this noon that precious Hariot of theirs eloped with young Jacob Troutmann; and they were married in Providence.

Through Mrs. Waring's stare of silent amazement broke a bland smile.

"Of all strange performances—"

she began.

Then as her tone changed with her

look she clapped her hands.

"Manton"—there was a note of gay relief in her voice—"I don't quite know what you mean by saying that I'm no match for your sister; but of one thing I'm certain, Cynthia will simply have to take the social responsibility of that appalling dowager off my hands! Do you know, Manton, I'm so sorry for Cynthia that I could almost forgive her everything? Now go away please, and be quiet, for I begin to feel that I can sleep to-night, after all."

Then, as Waring turned out the light, she settled herself among the pillows, and, in the darkness, her voice added a drowsy question: "What sort of relation, anyway, is a woman to another woman, whose son is the husband

of her daughter?"



THE BORROWER OF TROUBLE



HO does not know her? Constantly endeavoring to prevent the trouble she anticipates; and usually a fruitful source of it! Sometimes she is married and sometimes she is single,

like that celebrated "Clever Alice," who was found weeping under an ax wedged in the cellar roof; because "if she became the wife of her sweetheart, and if they had a child, and if that child should go into the cellar, the ax might fall on its head and kill it."

The girl of Mr. Grimm's "Household Fairy Tales" is only a slightly exaggerated type. We, ourselves, could point out many worthy women, old and young, whose feminine intuition, and pathetic, Cassandralike wisdom in regard to coming events and the future complications resulting therefrom, al-

most equal hers.

Then there is the woman who worries about you and your comfort; and the woman who worries about her own. There is the gloomily imaginative woman who works herself into a frenzy over possible misfortune to the absent; and the zealous toiler who wears herself to skin and bone in unnecessary preparation for the home-returning. There is the woman who is delicately unstrung at the mere thought of contact with the common, every-day labors of life; and the woman who lies in wait for duties, and pounces upon

them as a terrier upon a rat. Selfish or unselfish, they all of them seem to consider that the prescience that keeps the very air around them vibrating with anxiety is a commendable quality.

It is certainly not a companionable Who can expect to exchange pleasant, conversational ideas with a mother whose whole mind is concentrated upon the question of whether Willy did or did not shut the gate after him when he went to school? sure, if you could follow her thought to its uttermost limits, you might find that the family pug (blind) had been airing himself on the piazza; and that if he wandered down the steps, and then through the open gate into the road, he might fall a prey to the first passing automobile. However welcome an ending this would be for the blind pug, you would naturally sympathize with his mistress' dislike of having the misadventure take place outside her own front door, but you would not remember her jerky, abstracted sentences, bent head, and furtively roving eye as conducing greatly to the pleasures of a morning visit.

They have always some right on their side, the nervous people; that is the trouble. For instance, it is undoubtedly humane to wish to keep a blind pug intact if you wish to keep him at all, but—but—well, when an attitude of non-attention to the charms of your society has sufficiently irritated you, you are tempted to wish that the idea of the animal's danger had oc-

curred to his owner sooner, or-a good deal later!

There is much to be said, too, on the part of the maiden aunt who is left in charge of a boisterous family of children. How can she know that with perfect grace and assurance Clarence has footed it along the sloping roof of the cow-house a hundred times before her eye fell on the grisly scene; or that Albert is accustomed to swing and dangle from the branches of the orchard trees with the nonchalance of a Mowgli: or that Polly has a manual dexterity by which she manages to use the sharpest-pointed nursery scissors on many occasions without cutting her fin-The maiden aunt foresees so gers? plainly and painfully how the nephews and nieces in her charge may hurt themselves, that it is not surprising if (all unconsciously) she disturbs the poise of their self-confidence till they fulfil her gloomy prophecies. very naturally, the word "mustn't" with every tedious variation of accent salutes the juvenile ear for the rest of her agonized stay.

Poor aunt! She so earnestly desires their welfare that she can neither be at ease when they are out of her sight nor in it; and she succeeds in making life for herself and for them—in the words of the immortal Mr. Mantalini—

"one demned horrid grind."

The fatalistic theory that if Clarence's short but nefarious course has been run, his toppling off the cowhouse roof is an incident already arranged for, and not to be averted by warnings; while if destiny has other designs for him, his gay steps will be surely preserved in high places; that Albert is safe, unless forcordained to a thumping fall out of the tree; and the snipping or non-snipping of Polly's fingers is something predestined before Polly existed at all—such a theory, we maintain, would be soothing and of incalculable comfort to all weak-nerved maiden ladies temporarily entrusted with the care of other people's children. It is the fear that they, the maiden ladies, have left unspoken the word in smoon, or neglected the timely intervention or the ultimate precaution that oppresses them so cruelly; and who shall save them from themselves? The world is theirs to worry in; and nobody can help admitting that they have some cause for anxiety. But the dread of apprehended dangers is likely to unfit a person for meeting the emergency when it arrives. Minds made ready for aquatic disaster have found themselves but ill prepared to sustain the shock of thunderbolts; and quite helpless before a hanging.

Still, a far-seeing provision against minor as well as major misfortunes—a circumventing of the occasion before the occasion arrives—is ever a characteristic of the conscientious trouble-averter. Behold a family from whose midst a relation is about to depart. There is generally one member of a

family who takes traveling hard—or, perhaps we should say, with infinite caution and painstaking attention to detail. As a case in point, we intro-

duce such a member.

Cousin Euphemia does not trust an expressman any more than she trusts a postman, a conductor, a policeman, or any other licensed law-breaker in buttons. She trusts herself only. But she admits that she cannot carry her trunk to the station. She agrees, therefore, to deliver it up to the express. One of "the girls" offers to telephone. Cousin Euphemia (who would rather go herself to the office, and see with her own eyes the order written down) demurs, but is finally overruled.

A few minutes later.

"What time did they say they'd come to-morrow, dear?"

"Ten o'clock."

"Isn't that rather late for a one o'clock train?"

"I didn't think you'd want to pack too early."

"Oh, I'm packed now, dear."

A pause.

"You're sure they heard the name and address correctly? Downing is so often mistaken for Browning. And it would be awkward if they went to 7 or 17, instead of 70; wouldn't it, dear?"

"I'm sure they heard. They repeated it after me."

"They wouldn't go to West Eightythird Street instead of East, would they?"

"No. They've got it all right, I'm

quite certain."

"You said 'to-morrow,' and that it must go by the one o'clock train?"

"Yes, Cousin Euphemia."

"Well, thank you very much, dear, Now, if you'll give me the address, I'll just send them a postal card repeating all that. In case they didn't write it down at once they might forget, you know."

The next morning at breakfast.

Cousin Euphemia, already dressed for the journey—except in regard to her gloves and umbrella—is stirring her coffee with a rapid whirling movement of spoon; and from time to time looking furtively over her shoulder at the door.

"It's strange they haven't come for

that trunk; isn't it, dear?"

"No, Cousin Euphemia. We said ten o'clock, you know; and it's only nine. Are you going out this morning?"

"Not till I take the train."

"You've got your bonnet on, and I thought---"

"Yes, dear; and I've got my jacket in the hall with my bag and umbrella. I do like to feel that I am ready."

At ten, to the minute, she has the express company expostulated with by telephone. Again at ten-thirty. Again at eleven. During this hour she has seen herself (in the mind's eye) arriving trunkless at her destination; has gone through the discomfort of a night in borrowed habiliments; has conducted an unsuccessful search, and sued the company for her lost wardrobe. All this not once but many times.

At eleven-fifteen the wagon arrives, and the man comes up-stairs,

Great flutter.

Will he be so kind as to handle the trunk gently, and not let it stand on end? It is not packed to stand on end! Is he certain that it is not too heavy for him? And will he be sure not to

let it scratch the new paper off the walls on the way down-stairs? Will he be especially careful at the corners?

Then, just as he gets started, there is a sudden lapse of memory as to the tag. Was it firmly tied on? And is it, or is it not, directed on both sides, according to custom? By the time he reaches the hall there is a gnawing anxiety to compare once more the check he has left her with the one on the trunk; and after this comes the whispered entreaty to "get it there in time"; and the reluctant twenty-five cents pressed into

the ready hand.

The supreme inclination of Cousin Euphemia-like that of many nervous travelers-is to sit, booted and spurred, fully equipped, on the edges of chairs, glancing at the clock every five minutes, and returning amiably mechanical answers to any remarks addressed to her until such time as she can, with some faint show of reason, depart for the station. The dread of a block on the cars, or collapse on the part of her cab horse, assails her till she is safely ensconced (a good twenty minutes too soon) in the waiting-room. It usually takes more than the assurances of one official to convince her that she is on board the right train, when at last the right train is in a position to be boarded; and between fears that they will be late-and so inconveniently postpone the dinner-hour of the friends she is going to-or that by making up lost time they may meet with some accident -she is an exhausted woman when she finally reaches her destination.

This is a reasonably good example of precautionary nervousness on your own account; but the taking of present pains to save other people future trouble is a more serious phase of the same malady. The desire of old-fashioned mothers to dose children before a party (the middle-aged memory may even recall the delectable compound known as "Gregory's Mixture"); their anxiety to burden stalwart husbands and sons with overshoes to keep out possible wet, and thick flannels to ward off imaginary chill; the modern maternal forethought that worries over a boy's school, col-

lege, and club before the advent of the boy himself. These are all manifesta-

tions of the same trouble.

"Think ahead, think ahead, think ahead; and stand ready to circumvent fate," might be their motto; and a very good motto we should consider it if it were not for the fussiness with which they live up to it, and if the dread of being unprepared for an emergency did not constantly preoccupy the mind, undo the manners, and introduce a contagious tension into the atmosphere.

Fashionable nerves do not exhibit themselves in this somewhat trying, if unselfish, way. Nevertheless, they show curious developments of their own. In the last century it was extremely modish to have "the vapors"—another name for exceeding irritability of temper; and, a little later, there was a time when the willowy invalid had it

all her own way.

A well-known author—but just which well-known author escapes us-once declared that for ruling a household, and stamping a path through life, there was nothing like a fine, bad temper. We confidently affirm and declare that the nervous invalid could and did overrule the bad temper. What man would be brute enough to storm in the temple of suffering; to make white hands flutter up to outraged ears; to bring tears to appealing eyes, aches to a delicate head; to object to anything that a supine vitality required; to permit himself even the harsh judgment that a remarkable increase of strength was to be observed whenever the exertion demanded was in the cause of pleasure?

It is not too much to say that a whole neighborhood could be dominated by a woman who had taught herself to regard her nervous system as of paramount importance; and to wield it ruthlessly as a weapon of offense and defense. Children might not shout, nor carpets be beaten in back yards (where the law had been powerless); pet dogs might not bark; nor parrots screech the favorite tunes that had been so efficiently taught them. The neighbors united in avoiding the slightest danger of giving Mrs. Hystrung hysterics. And as,

for hand-organs—a persistent grinder might almost fear lynching.

Could a mere bad temper have accomplished so much? No, indeed. For, while many neighbors would be weak enough to shrink from provoking an exhibition of rage, others, bold in antagonism, might go so far as to invite it. But who would have the heart to occasion a nervous crisis in a neighbor's wife?

The supremacy of the interesting invalid is, however, a thing of the past. Nowadays, in this age of restlessness, no woman of the world would care to conduct life, no matter how dominantly, from a recumbent position. alert, self-reliant; strenuous energy has marked her for its own. She is too welltrained to worry, or at least to appear to worry, over the numerous details of her daily life. But the pressure of the atmosphere is about her-the American love of motion is in her blood. She is one of a community that lives, moves, and has its being in a condition of perpetual hurry. She does not care to be an onlooker, or to have an existence of her own apart. Very seldom, therefore, does she suggest calm quiet, or the peacefulness of leisure. She is, if anything, too capable-too clever. We sometimes wonder whether, by contrast, a stupid woman would not seem as restful as a dark room to a weary

With the demands of modern fashionable life, many a modern fashionable woman seems like the tightly wound mainspring of a watch. Domestically, charitably, learnedly or sportingly, socially, frivolously she goes till she breaks down. When she has utterly exhausted herself, they call it "nervous prostration," and clap her into a sanitarium for a rest cure.

It is not concentration upon any one form of work—or amusement, for that matter—that does the mischief. It is the permitting of multitudinous demands upon the attention. Specialization seems to be the only cure for damaged nerves in these days. To stick to the most important duties, to select the realest pleasures—the ones that

wear best-to devote yourself to them and let other things go; this road appears to be the nearest approach to salvation. Protect your own identity, your own time; spare yourself wherever you would spare another person. It is in no way meritorious to be unnecessarily a drudge. The self-reservation that makes for good nature is far better to live with than the self-sacrifice that produces exhaustion and querulousness.

A woman who has not properly taken care of herself is in no fit condition to take care of others. In many cases it is impossible to escape all the little claws of your surroundings; but it is possible to alter your state of mind in regard to them. When the claws draw you "every which way," stand still. Do not let yourself fuss. Be deliberate in your actions, no matter how your thoughts hurry you. The mere act of walking across a room slowly, when you would like to run, is good discipline. There is no day in the year in which you can accomplish all that you set out to do: and the sooner you realize this limitation the better.

These salutary remarks are intended the too-conscientious housewife rather than for the nervous pleasureseeker; but they are not entirely without bearing on her case. In this country we see far too little feminine restfulness. Foreigners complain that the American woman-the pretty, smart woman to whom they bring letters, and whom as a hostess they find charming -has no atmosphere of home about her. They comment upon the fact that she "entertains," but does not "live" her drawing-room; that comfortably wellworn books do not lie about in pleasant confusion; that never is there a bit of needlework at hand to be "picked up," as the English and French woman "picks up" her work, as she talks. They say that the life of the American may go on up-stairs, or out of doors, but never easily and unconsciously before them. They complain that there is

a certain gay constraint; a sort of superficial icing of convention, apparent even in frivolity. It never seems to relax; and the idea of being always on parade becomes irksome. So also does the sense of living at a pace that gives an allotted time and no more to bestow upon any one thing. Greatly distressed are foreigners by the contemplation of what Americans call "leisure."

This criticism, of course, applies to the men as well as the women-to the whole nation, in fact-and it cannot be denied that undue haste and nervousness suggest weakness in a nation as well as in an individual. Strength can afford to be serenely idle, knowing that when the call for action comes, it will be ready, whether this strength is caught unawares or faces something already foreseen. Conscious that it can

trust itself, it is calm.

The fault of a whole nation is a pretty difficult thing to eradicate. One gentleman of our acquaintance affirms that the entire condition can be accounted for by indigestion. But whether the nervousness precedes, or follows, he does not say. Bad cooking, he wisely observes, tends to dyspepsia; and dyspepsia to almost all evils of the age. On our part, we should be inclined to set some of the evils down to that race against time for money, which takes all the force a man is capable of between

the cradle and the grave. Whatever the cause, we may as well admit that we are at present a nervous nation. For future generations, the remedy seems to lie with the women. Let us have calm mothers. Let sisters and wives also copy a heavenly placid-Let even maiden aunts join the smooth-browed band; but first and foremost, let us secure calm motherswomen who will not wear themselves out anticipating pleasure or apprehending disaster; who have learned to take life as it comes, high-hearted and se-





LLIE sat on the edge of Nelly's bed with its owner, and conversation was free and constant. Millie was bent on persuading Nelly to go with her to see some friends in Putney on

the next afternoon.

"They're delightful people," she urged. "The eldest girl sings; and the father is very clever, too."

These vague inducements did not shake Nelly's resolution to stay with Mrs. Martin and help her to receive any casual Sunday callers.

"The fact is," she said, in answer to further entreaties, "I think some one may come to-morrow; and I would

rather be at home."

Millie detected a conscious tone in Nelly's voice, and demanded details, which Nelly much enjoyed relating. With little smiles and pauses, she told how she had met an American, Mr. Delarne, at Paris-Plage; and how, the night before Nelly left, she had had a talk with him-"about nothing much," she concluded. "Of course, there's nothing in it, but when he happened to meet us at the station the next morning, he asked if he might get the Soneys to bring him to call. They did last week; and auntie said she hoped we should see something of him before he sailed for home; and would he come one Sunday afternoon? That's all."

Millie was glowing and radiant. She sniffed romance as a charger sniffs battle. Her manner to Nelly became tenderly gay, delicately comprehending; and Mrs. Martin uneasily felt that

something was toward. When the girls met on Sunday morning, Millie bestowed with her kiss the breathy whisper: "I know he's coming!" and Nelly began to regret the confidence she had given in a rash moment. She had yet to learn that some things are too slight to be told without unconsciously exag-

gerating them.

Mr. Delarne did call, and he came early—and the significance of this fact strengthened Millie in her determination to "leave them together," if possible. After surveying and studying him with an eager interest which inevitably proved to all three that Nelly had thought it worth while to talk of him to her friend, Millie rose and crossed the room, begging Mrs. Martin to let her help with the tea. On Mrs. Martin's polite refusal she entered into a light conversation, standing well between the couple on the sofa and the hostess, with her back to them. When Mrs. Martin, after several vain attempts to look round Millie's plump figure, somewhat peremptorily waved her to a chair, she went to it with a commiserating glance at Nelly, who seemed anything but grateful for the consideration shown her.

The conversation had not proceeded long when Nelly perceived a sudden lightening of Millie's face. Her heart sank, even before Millie rose and, holding her handkerchief to her forehead, murmured an apology to Mrs.

Martin, and left the room.

"I did not know Millie had a headache?" said Mrs. Martin interrogatively.

"Nor I," responded Nelly, somewhat guiltily. Delarne looked rather puzzled, but was about to continue talking, when

Elise entered.

"If you please, madame," she said, "Mademoiselle Millie is very sorry to trouble you, but she cannot find any sal volatile; and would you tell her if you have Doctor Gray or Doctor Kerr?"

Mrs. Martin turned a concerned look on Nelly, who immediately gave the situation away by exclaiming earnestly and with conviction: "Oh, it's nothing. I'm sure it's nothing. You needn't go

to her."

This revelation of apparent complicity forced Mrs. Martin to seem to accept the message; and, after some hesitation, she left the room with a heightened color. Nelly, scarlet and miserable, glanced at Delarne, over whom a subtle change had come. She was quite aware that it all looked as though she was trying to be left alone with him, and she was not surprised to see the stony politeness which had succeeded to his previous friendliness. She could almost see passing through his mind the recollection of her friendship for Miss Carruthers at Paris-Plage, the girl whom he abominated, and her silly imitation of her model's flippant rudeness. He would think her present behavior a fitting sequel!

She stood by the window endeavoring to talk about any indifferent subject, and receiving with growing dejection his frigid replies. His pride and his vanity were both up in arms; and he was not at all softened by the fact that Nelly was laying her apparent snares with the clumsiness of a novice. Things at last reached such a pitch that she turned suddenly into the room, sat down near him, and burst out: "I had nothing to do with it—Millie, I mean."

Delarne raised his eyebrows slightly, and let his voice drop through several acres of mountain glacier before it

reached her.

"Of course not, What should you have to do with your friend's head-ache?"

terie:

"I thought you might think——" began Nelly. Then the hopelessness of

it flashed upon her; and with commendable spirit she plunged into another subject.

"I hope you have had an enjoyable

time in England?"

"Most interesting. Several curious character studies have presented themselves, both here and in France."

"Then you're going back a wiser, if not a sadder, man?" miserably rejoined Nelly, striving after the Carruthers' lightness. "Are you going to publish your impressions of the English?"

"I think not. I do not like to be

ungallant."

This spoke volumes; and Nelly, sank deeper into the red mire of confusion into which Millie's sentimentality had thrust her. In her stress of mind, she added the final touch by jumping up from her seat, flushed and conscious, when Mrs. Martin reappeared.

Delarne gave her one glance, and then inquired, in a cold, stone-filtered

voice, after the invalid.

"Oh, I do not think it is anything very serious," said Mrs. Martin; "but I

have sent for Doctor Kerr."

Delarne rose to take his leave; and Mrs. Martin, determined to save as much of the situation as had not already been given away, bade him a definite farewell.

"As you are sailing within six weeks," she said, "we shall not be seeing you again. So I will wish you bon voyage now. Nelly, ring the

bell."

When the door had closed on his glacial back there was a pause. Then Nelly broke out: "I could kill Millie!" to which Mrs. Martin responded: "I could kill both of you! What does it mean?"

Nelly's explanations were scarcely over when Millie came in, full of interest, and without a trace of headache.

"How did it go off?" she asked

eagerly.

"It! He went off!" said Nelly. "Never, never will I tell you anything again!"

Five minutes later Mrs. Martin joined their spirited conversation with a neat summary, addressed to Millie, but containing more than one point for Nelly's consideration.

"It is well to remember," she said, "that you are much too young to play fate. Love and marriage are difficult subjects; leave their management to your elders. It will be not only wiser, but more delicate. One other thing; it is almost as disloyal to act on a confidence, sensible or silly, as it is to repeat it."

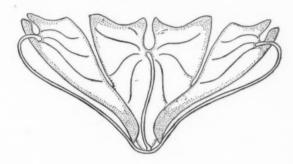
Mrs. Martin looked at her subdued

audience, and walked to the door, whence she flung her Parthian shot.

"It is not particularly modest or attractive," she said, "to imagine that every young man who seems to like a girl is going to fall in love with her."

When she had left the room, Nelly looked at the other culprit.

"Let us separate till supper-time," she said, in a tone of strong repression. "A few quiet hours will be good for your headache."



Aurora O'Rook

BY WALLACE IRWIN

A URORA O'ROOK was the temptingest cook
That ever set pan to the top of a fire.

Her cakes were a dream, and her onions in cream
Would stir a stone god to a gourmet's desire.

But I cannot refrain from the truth and explain
That her face nary trace of divinity hinted;
Her nose was as red as the hair on her head,
Her chin was adorned with a wart, and she squinted.

Aurora O'Rook,
Ah, the dream of a cook!
Such genius as hers isn't learned from the book.
Tears come to my eyes
When I think of the pies
Popped hot from the stove by Aurora O'Rook.

Aurora, it seemed, in her fond fancy dreamed
Of Barney McManus, the groom of the stable,
Who came to partake of the marvelous steak
Which Rory displayed on the broad kitchen table.
He swore that her salads were sweeter than ballads
Or any love-poem that ever was scribbled;
He'd barter his soul for one cinnamon roll,
As he often remarked with a sigh as he nibbled:

"Aurora O'Rook,
Ye're a peach av a cook;
Yer janius, faith now, don't come out o' no book.
It softens me heart
Just to taste wan swate tart
Turned out av the pan by Aurora O'Rook!"

But Barney at last a fond, roving eye cast
On fair Kitty Kelly with whom he oft tarried
And blarneyed and sparked till the neighbors remarked,
The saints being willing, they'd surely be married.
But Rory was sly; so she baked up a pie
And used all her marvelous skill in the making;
And this with a note which she carefully wrote
She sent off to Barney still hot from the baking.

"From Rory O'Rook
Who knows how to cook
Some pies what would lure a proud king to her nook.
Though kisses are sweet,
When ye're ready to eat
Remember the pastry of Rory O'Rook!"

Oh, deep was the sigh Barney gave as the pie."
He gobbled; then beautiful Kitty forsaking,
He flew like a breeze, and plumped down on his knees
Beside the great oven where Rory stood baking.
"O Rory O'Rook, though awhile I forsook
Yer pies for the eyes of more beautiful ladies;
Though angels be fair, yet I'm free to declare
I'd stay down below, were ye cookin' in Hades!

"Aurora O'Rook,
Ye're a bird av a cook!
Yer charm don't depend on a smile or a look.
Though yer face may be plain,
Yet it's foolish and vain
To try to resist ye, Aurora O'Rook!"



Play-readers by no means infallible judges. "The Three of Us" excels in homely touches, and Carlotta Nillson is one of the finest actresses in the country. Lena Ashwell shows great force and naturalness in "The Shulamite," in most respects a very remarkable work. "Caesar and Cleopatra," produced by Forbes Robertson and Gertrude Elliott, an unalloyed delight. William Gillette's "Clarice," neither a very good nor a very bad play. Nothing very wonderful about Viola Allen's revival of "Cymbeline." The new Lincoln Square Theater opened with "The Love Route," a picturesque and interesting play. "Eiteen Asthore," excelent of its kind. "Cape Cod Folks" a hash of all other pastorals. "Sam Houston" another atrocity of the early season. Musical comedies



OMETHING over a year ago there came into my office, in one of the theater buildings along Broadway, an earnest young woman with a play. At that time the reading of manu-

scripts was part of my regular employment, and it was a dull day that did not bring at least five earnest young women and ten very bad plays. A season of good luck in separating the chaff from the wheat-a season during which I had refused such subsequent failures as "Mary and John," "His Majesty," and "The Two Wetherbys"-had imparted great self-confidence, and without hesitation I returned this particular bundle of typewritten pages to this particular earnest young woman. If my memory serves me properly, I threw in some gratuitous advice about avoiding scenes in which girls visited men at midnight, and suggested that it might be well to provide for this piece a concluding act in which something was concluded.

The earnest young woman was Rachel Crothers, the play was "The Three of Us," and I apologize.

I have no excuse to offer for my unappreciative view of Miss Crothers' comedy. The-Lady-Who-Goes-to-the-Theater-With-Me demanded one, and I could only reply that the reader who never made a mistake in judging manuscripts would be worth a million dollars a year to any management in New York. This rejected effort, eventually produced by Walter N. Lawrence at the Madison Square, probably is the best play of the present year. It certainly is the best acted.

tainly is the best acted.

"The Three of Us" has no single great scene—I still decline to regard the incident of the nocturnal call as occasion for anything more vital than a rarebit-party—and its story cannot be set down as brilliantly original or irresistibly gripping. Where the piece excels is in its hundreds of homely touches, its every-day humor and

pathos, its splendid character drawing, and the genuine appeal of what a theatrical manager would dub its "heart interest." I have always maintained that it is the ordinary things of life, not the extraordinary; the little episodes, not the big events, which, focused onto the stage, exert the most powerful influence. Miss Crothers has succeeded in proving this through "The Three of Us." Rhy MacChesney fighting for her reputation in the "rooms" of Louis Berresford-the places women visit at midnight are "rooms," even in Nevada -was not nearly so effective as Rhy MacChesney making a pitiful, womanly effort to infuse manhood into her rest-

less and thoughtless brother.

Rhy has two brothers, left to her care, together with a mine of doubtful value, at the death of her father. That father believed implicitly in his claim, and bade Rhy never to give it up, and Rhy, believing equally in her younger brothers, is determined never to give them up, either. In the case of Clem, the elder, she has a hard battle to fight. Clem has reached the age of uneasiness, and he longs desperately to get out of the poverty and monotony of their life in the West. Money is the obvious means to this end, and Clem accepts a bribe from Louis Berresford in return for the information, gleaned by eavesdropping, that a certain property about to be sold "dirt cheap" by some friends contains valuable ore. Berresford loves Rhy, and Stephen Townley, who loves her, too, and who confided in her the real worth of the property, can but believe that the girl has led him on simply that she might extract the secret which has been turned to the account of his rival. This complication never is quite cleared up, and nobody gives a hang whether it is or not. Rhy's struggle with Clem, whom she intercepts in the gray dawn as he is about to slip away and desert her: Rhy's pleading, wheedling, flattering, loving, commanding scene, during which she saves the boy's future and shows those who can understand it the glorious spectacle of man in the making—this it is which proves the brawn and bone and sinew of "The Three of "Us." We knew in the beginning that the affair of the mine would turn out all right, and that *Rhy* would marry *Ste*-

phen Townley.

I have said many times that Carlotta Nillson is one of the finest actresses in the country. I say it again, after having witnessed her wonderfully lifelike impersonation of Rhy. Miss Nillson has been getting very stout of late. and the dresses she wears accentuate the fact, but age cannot wither nor costume stale her infinite ability. She puts little reliance in stage tricks, and seems to care less for effectiveness at the expense of naturalness, with the result that she is the only person in Mr. Lawrence's company who never gets a round of applause after an exit—and, I beg to repeat, one of the finest actresses

in the country.

Considering that the clever portrayal of a youth in "When We Were Twentyone" made the everlasting fortune of Henry Woodruff, the young man who plays Clem in "The Three of Us," ought to be a millionaire this time next year. His name is John Westley, and his insight into boy nature is as clear as his outward expression is genuine and convincing. It would be difficult to say just how much of Miss Crothers' wellearned success is due to Miss Nillson and Mr. Westley. Frederic Truesdell is an honest, impressive Townley, and Henry Kolker reveals the scoundrelism of Berresford without making him the sort of villain who would be arrested on suspicion by the first police officer who looked him in the eye. Eva Vincent, Stanley Dark, Jane Peyton, and Master George Clarke contribute to an absolutely perfect interpretation of the play. Mr. Dark was the author of "Man and His Angel," which I attended for this magazine when it was done at Hackett's. I hereby forgive him.

Until they read the newspapers of the following morning, most of the audience which saw Lena Ashwell make her metropolitan début at the Lyric Theater thought that they had enjoyed "The Shulamite." Chicago raved over the play, which New York critics found to be dull, unconvincing, and gloomy. Dull and unconvincing the drama certainly did not seem to me, but I am perfectly willing to admit that it is gloomy. So is "Hamlet."

Miss Ashwell, who introduced Leah Kleschna and Yo San to London, is an actress whose method is somewhere between that of Mrs. Fiske, Miss Nillson, and Margaret Anglin. Her voice, unpleasant at first hearing, soon grows to exert a charm over the listener, and her work has only one consistent fault-its monotony. Like the three women mentioned above, she is able to achieve intensity and great force without sacrificing naturalness. Miss Ashwell is fortunate in all the members of her supporting company save two, John Blair and George Le Guere. Edward R. Mawson, as a rugged, brutal Boer, Beryl Mercer, as a terrorized Kaffir girl, and Maude Granger, as a primminded widow, are excellent.

The scene of "The Shulamite," which was written by Claude Askew and Edward Knoblauch, is laid in the Transvaal. Deborah, the character enacted by Miss Ashwell, has married a rough, old farmer, named Simeon Krillet, whose ethical code is that of the slavetrader, and whose rule over servants and women is backed by the use of a whip. Deborah feels herself degraded and bestialized by this rule, but she has been taught that the part of a wife is obedience, and she makes no protest until her husband's English overseer, Robert Waring, begs her not to submit to being beaten. The woman, already half in love with Waring, swears that Simeon shall never lash her again. When, at the end of the first act, he attempts it, she stays his hand with the lie that she is about to bear him a child.

The Boer's attitude toward his wife changes at once. He becomes kindness itself. At the end of the second act, which takes place in a barn, he has his cart made ready, so that he may drive to town after certain luxuries for Deborah. Waring, comprehending that he is nourishing a passion for the wife, begs to go instead of Simeon, meaning never to return. Simeon con-

sents. A storm has come up, and the thunder is heard crashing across the plain. The overseer departs, leaving behind a diary in which Simeon reads of the man's mad love for Deborah. At the height of his rage she enters. Simeon explains what he has discovered, expecting her to be horror-struck, but Deborah, inspired at the realization that her love is reciprocated, wild with grief at divining that Waring has gone for good, breaks out with the whole truth-that she worships the Englishman, that she hates her husband, that she has lied about her prospective motherhood. Simeon, dumfounded and then furious, calls to Heaven to pronounce * sentence upon this Shulamite. His answer is a flash of lightning and a terrific clap of thunder. "That is the judgment of God!" he exclaims. am going to kill you!" He runs to the house for a weapon. Waring returns. "The judgment of God" has demolished his wagon and sent him back to Deborah. He takes in the situation at a glance, and, with drawn revolver, rushes off to meet the husband. Deborah stands at a window in the driving rain. She can see nothing, but she hears two reports—the crack of a pistol and a gun-shot. "Which one?" "Which one?" The knob on the door is shaken. "Come in, Simeon." But it is Waring. Simeon is dead. "We are free," says the woman. Waring tells her that he has a wife in England. "It doesn't matter," whispers Deborah; "nothing matters. Simeon to the cart, and to-morrow we will swear that he was killed by light-"I can't carry him alone," Waring declares. "I will help you," answers the widow. "Only put this over his face." They go out into the night. The curtain falls.

In the last of the play's three acts there is only one notable situation; that in which the sister of the murdered husband unearths the truth and sells her silence. *IVaring's* wife dies conveniently, and he and *Deborah* start off for London. A positively magnificent drama sprawls into pap and pulp simply that sentimental theatergoers may not

lose their keenness for supper. If the authors felt the necessity of having a "happy ending," one marvels that they ever gave Waring a wife to make him pitifully irresolute and then to be snuffed out herself by a complication of weaknesses. However, any "happy ending" to the story of "The Shulamite" must have been an unhappy ending to its strength. One felt sorry that nobody had enough of the courage of conviction to do something like Zola did in "Therese Raquin," where mutual knowledge of mutual guilt brought widow and lover to the point of hating each other through the very crime that had been meant to insure their love. Despite the concession upon which I have dwelt, "The Shulamite" is a very remarkable work. The reason why this opinion isn't general is that the play was

not written by Ibsen.
For an infinite and indefinite number of years the biggest of our authors have manifested toward such historical celebrities as they have adopted much the same feeling that prompted George Bernard Shaw's Cleopatra to observe of Julius Cæsar: "You mustn't say common, earthy things about him." at the very instant of the remark, Casar was performing the "common, earthy" operation of eating, and the meanest of us knows that there never lived a person so transcendently great that he did not have scores of such little human weaknesses as an appetite. Shakespeare, with all his genius, did not have the originality to reveal any of these traits in Cæsar, and it remained for the posing, pretending, self-advertising, brilliant, iconoclastic Irishman across the water to picture a conqueror who neither conversed in blank verse nor maintained in every-day life the attitude he might have struck in posing for a sculptor. This picture is part of the comedy of "Cæsar and Cleopatra." the presentation of which by Forbes Robertson and Gertrude Elliott, at the New Amsterdam, proved one of the few unalloyed delights of the season.

Shaw's wit plays like lightning and destroys as much. His Casar is an elderly man, sensitive about his age and his baldness, rather fond of grandiloquizing, and deliciously colloquial in his lighter moments. Cleopatra, as seen in her girlhood by Shaw, is very feminine, very kitteny, extremely like the young woman to whom you were engaged before you married the lady who is now your wife. The audacity of the thing makes it laughable, and vet such is the genius of the author that you come away from the theater with a new understanding of the charm of the Egyptian and a new idea of the greatness of the Roman. Story, as the word is used commonly, the play has none, and, if it had, I should not tell you enough of it to rob you of the incentive to read the comedy in its published form. Shaw sends Cæsar to Alexandria, where he exchanges some lessons in self and national government for a few pleasant hours with Cleopatra. There is no love between the two, and the soldier returns to Rome promising to provide a consolation prize in the form of Mark Antony. The unfolding of this plot gives opportunity for the best wit, the best philosophy, and the best dramatic construction of the scintillant Shaw.

Forbes Robertson, always a credit to his profession, has done nothing finer than Casar, unless it is Hamlet. He grasps and makes his audiences grasp the most microscopic points of the character, and he reads lines as nobody else that I know can even pretend to read Gertrude Elliott, a pretty but rather liquid young woman when she left these shores, has developed into an excellent artist, who is seen to notable advantage in the rôle of Cleopatra. Adeline Bourne, Charles Langley, Sidney Carlisle, Percy Rhodes, Ian Robertson, and A. H. Allen are best in a supporting cast of uniform capability.

The settings are exquisite.

There are many degrees of compromise between a good play and a bad play, and it is somewhere in this middle ground that one must place "Clarice." William Gillette, who wrote the piece and heads the presenting company, first introduced his work to London, which scorned it: next to Boston, which enthused over it; and finally to New York, which did it the scantest possible justice. "Clarice" may not stand the test of a technical tape-measure, but it certainly is an interesting and diverting little comedy, with touches of real poetry and of honest feeling. To judge a theatrical offering without employing one's emotions is like judging a picture without employing one's eyes, and the critic who does either makes a grave mistake. Most plays are written to appeal to the sensibilities, and when audiences laugh and weep at them their primary purpose has been achieved. I saw three audiences laugh and weep at "Clarice."

There are only seven characters in Mr. Gillette's idyllic effort, which was revealed at the Garrick. The first of these, on the program and in authority, is Judith Clancy, an aged negress who presides over the South Carolina home of Doctor Carrington. The physician has been banished to this place by his fear of pulmonary trouble, and he has taken along his ward, Clarice, with whom he falls in love. Doctor Denbeigh loves Clarice, too, and, inspired by her aunt, Mrs. Trent, he attempts to keep her from his brother physician by telling Carrington that he is in the last stages of consumption. Carrington believes the story, sends his sweetheart away, attempts suicide, and is saved by the repentance of Denbeigh.

The principal value of the piece is in its first act, which would be a complete comedy of itself, and which contains some wonderfully charming love scenes, and in its last act, which is moving melodrama. There is no disguising the fact that the line of story whereon the author hangs his situations sags sadly in the center. "Clarice" is a strange mixture of the newest and the oldest in construction; a queer reminder of Mr. Gillette's marvelous progressiveness and of the fact that he began writing for the stage nearly thirty years ago. One finds such modern methods as the stretching of an unimportant conversation to cover several halts of two characters making an exit, or the fading lights used in "Sherlock Holmes," side by side with such antique machinery as

incidental, music and the furtherance of the plot by the reading of a letter as it is being written. Many of the florid and impossible humorous scenes are of the sort one observes in half-forgotten successes dragged from the flattering dull light of the past into the searching rays of the present. Nevertheless, if you have two dollars and a desire to experience a pleasant sensation 'round your heart, go to see "Clarice."

Mr. Gillette's Carrington might be programmed "alias Sherlock Holmes, alias Lewis Dumont, alias Augustus Billings." There is not the slightest difficulty in recognizing Mr. Gillette, nor would anybody who appreciates subtle, artistic acting desire that there should be. Marie Doro is ideal in the title-rôle, while Lucille La Verne's Judith is the realest negress I can recall having seen on the stage. Frank Burbeck, Adelaide Prince, Francis Carlyle, and Stokes Sullivan are admirable in their respective capacities—as are the two settings.

So many more learned scribes than I have said so many more learned things than I could say about "Cymbeline, that I shall devote only a few words to Viola Allen's performance of this drama at the Astor. To my untutored mind, there is nothing very wonderful about the revival except the fact that it didn't stir up Anthony Comstock. I have heard of the moral arbiter being stirred up by less scandalous scenes than the nocturnal visit of Iachimo to the chamber of Imogen, under whose breast he spies a mole "right proud of that most delicate lodging." Surely if Mr. Comstock had known of all this he would at least have insisted upon the dermatological operation of cutting out the mole. Miss Allen's company is far from good, including an unsatisfactory Leonatus, a clowning Cloten, and a Cymbeline, who, to borrow the phrase of a Denver critic, "plays the king as though he were always expecting some one else to play the ace." I. H. Gilmour's Iachimo is the one glaring exception to the rule of mediocrity in the supporting organization. Miss Allen makes a charming Imogen, looking

lovely in her boy's clothes, and bringing to the rôle considerable grace and sincerity. Her worst fault is unintelligibility. A self-appointed humorist sitting behind me commented on this reading, when he was asked how he enjoyed the performance, by saying: "Well, the music seems good, but I can't make

out much about the lyrics.

beginning of the season.

An attractive white-and-gold theater, warmed by carpets and draperies of red, was added to the list of metropolitan playhouses the last of October, when the Lincoln Square opened with Guy Standing and Odette Tyler in "The Love Route." The Lincoln Square is at Broadway and Sixty-sixth Street, farther up-town than any other place of amusement in the business district, and it is so effectually concealed in the center of an office building that nobody suspected its existence until the

'The Love Route" was composed by Edward Peple, author of "The Prince Chap," who probably wanted to show that he could do something more than write a "pretty play." In this project. and in the ambition to turn out a popular hit, he succeeded. "The Love Route" is a conventional, old-fashioned melodrama, with bold "comedy relief" and many climaxes, but it is picturesque and mightily interesting. The story concerns the efforts of John Ashby, an engineer, to build a railway across the Texas ranch belonging to Allene Houston. Miss Houston hates railways, but she loves Ashby, and, after much breathing of defiance on either side, and the firing of several pistol-shots, the wheels of progress turn on her property. A scene in which the laying of ties and the spiking of rails is actually shown proves exciting, but is not, as the newspapers said, absolutely novel. The same thing was done some years ago in a melodrama called "The Contractor." Mr. Standing, Miss Tyler, H. S. Northrup, and Olive May contribute to making "The Love Route" a big bargain at the prices prevailing at the Lincoln Square.

Another good value at a dollar is "Eileen Asthore," a new melodrama

by Theodore Burt Savre, which recently was introduced to the metropolis by Chauncey Olcott. When The-Lady-Who-Goes-to-the-Theater-With-Me and I dropped in at the New York, that commodious house was crowded with simple souls who had a night off and were absolutely reveling in Mr. Olcott's strenuous attempts to free Ire-The Lady and I were placed behind a fine, fat post, which sliced Mr. Sayre's play in half as neatly as one slices a pound cake. Just at the most thrilling points of the performance Mr. Olcott would disappear on the other side of that post, and there would be an intermission for us until he emerged

again.

Mr. Olcott is seen as Dick Temple. a young Celt, with a Sydney Carton thirst and a propensity for relieving his feelings, after vital moments, by bursting into song. In the first act he becomes enamored of Eileen O'Donnell, a particularly bad actress, and is adopted by her father, who promises to send him to Trinity College. In the second act, a year later, he has been through Trinity, having broken even my record between the preliminary examinations and the conclusion that universities are for men who have plenty of time to waste. Perhaps Dick didn't go to Trinity, after all. Perhaps Eileen's father changed his mind. He may have changed it on the eastern end of that post. Anyway, Richard still loves Eileen, and so does Sir Geoffrey Loftus, who detects her brother conspiring against British rule in Ireland. Sir Geoffrey promises to get the brother, whose name is Rodney, out of trouble if Eileen can be tricked into marrying him and Richard will go to Holland. (Yes, gentle reader, I, too, wondered when I heard the aspiration.) Temple, seeming to agree, tricks Loftus, sending Rodney to Holland in his stead and winning the hand of Eileen. As an aid to the accomplishment of this task, he sings two capital songs, "Day Dreams" and "Eileen Asthore," and two others.

Seriously considered, the play is an excellent one of its sort. Mr. Sayre has ingenuity, wit, and an abundant stock of ideas, so that, at the very worst, nobody could call his work dull. Mr. Olcott really is a good actor, though he will always be painfully conscious of his legs, and he betrays a curious fondness for standing behind furniture. Of Florence Lester, who has the title-rôle, I have already spoken. The others in the performance call for no extended notice.

"Cape Cod Folks," a rural drama, presented at the Academy of Music just before the engagement there of Robert Mantell, proved to be a hash of all the other pastorals that have been produced in half a century. There was a little of "The Old Homestead," a little of "'Way Down East," and a great deal of "Shore Acres." Earl W. Mayo, the author, had overlooked nothing, from riding-breeches for the villain to a double quartet. The merits of the piece-plays are like men in that none is so bad as to be without good qualities—were a funny idea relating to a quaint political situation, and a remarkably realistic representation of a storm at sea. Earle Brown, Charles Mackay, E. J. Radcliffe, J. O. Le Brasse, George Richards, John D. O'Hara, Harry Montgomery, Sarah Perry, Bessie Barriscale, and Lizzie Conway were among those who struggled with the manuscript.

"Sam Houston," acted by Clay Clement, who preceded "Madame Butterfly" at the Garden, was another atrocity of the early season. It would be a waste of time to comment on this performance, which was a silly mess of words that might have made a fairly complete dictionary, but certainly did not make a play. Mr. Clement was aided and abetted by an organization of forty persons who contributed to the atmosphere of town-hall theatricals which he brought into the Garden.

During his stay at the New Amsterdam, before Mr. Robertson and Miss Elliott took his place, Henry B. Irving revived "The Lyons Mail" and "Charles I.," and produced "Markheim," "King Réné's Daughter," and "Mauricette." The first, an adaptation of the story by

Robert Louis Stevenson, is a one-act tragedy rather like "Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"; the second is a pleasing curtain-raiser which afforded an opportunity to Dorothea Baird; the third is a whole evening's entertainment and an agreeable one. Kyrle Bellew followed "The House of Mirth" at the Savoy, presenting A. Conan Doyle's dramatization of his own stories about "Brigadier Gerard," and May Irwin offered a farce, called "Mrs. Wilson—That's All," by George V. Hobart, at the Bijou. At the hour of going to press both seemed to be lamentable failures.

The-Lady-Who-Goes-to-the-Theater-With-Me complains that I do not pay sufficient attention to productions of musical comedy. I should be glad to reform in this respect if the performances given invited more attention. You can write only so much about one idea, regardless of how many times that one idea is used, and a line of five operatic farces in which the principal comedian dons the disguise of a waiter is rather a discouraging procession. "The Rich Mr. Hoggenheimer," at Wallack's, is a stupid and vulgar piece written around the character that Sam Bernard introduced to us in "The Girl from Kay's." Mr. Bernard struggles manfully with his rôle, and it is only fair to say that he succeeds in keeping his audiences in roars of laughter. The episodes of Hoggenheimer's experience at the customs office and of his abbreviation of an expensive cablegram really are clever and amusing, while two interpolated songs, written by Paul West and Jerome Kern, and respectively entitled "Poker Love" and "Don't You Want a Paper?" are worth hearing. Similarly, a ditty called "Crocodile" and a ballad named "Burmah Girl" are the redeeming features of "The Blue Moon," in which James T. Powers made his bow at the Casino. Mr. Powers, like Mr. Bernard, deserves credit for his own work.

Both of these musical comedies are staged exquisitely. There seems no limit beyond which managers refuse to go in the gentle art of putting fine clothes on scarecrows.

FOR BOOK LOVERS Sessions

A superabundance of so-called fiction of psychology. Maria Montalto in F. Marion Crawford's "A Lady of Rome," an attractive portrait. "The Charlatans," by Bert L: Taylor, an exposure of sham musical culture. Robert Hichens surpasses himself in "The Call of the Blood," "The Perfect Tribute," by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, an interesting delineation of Lincoln's character. "The Beloved Vagabond," by William J. Locke, readable and entertaining fiction. Miriam Michelson proves again her versatility in "Anthony Overman." Sewell Food's "Shorty McCabe" sufficiently true to life. H. C. Chatfield-Taylor's "Moliere" an excellent biography. "The Avenging Hour," by H. F. Prevost-Battersby, an unusual tale, told with consummate art. "Buchanan's Wile," by Justus Miles Forman, a series of absurd impossibilities



DVEL readers who prefer studies in character to complication of plot have nothing to complain of on the score of the quantity of entertainment that has recently been provided

for them. Indeed, there has been, within the past year, so much of the socalled fiction of psychology that one may be almost justified in regarding it as significant of a tendency, if not a fad, particularly when one considers the fact that most of it has been concerned with the intricate workings of the feminine mind.

How or when or where the movement began is not of very great importance; it is enough to say that it has become noticeable since the appearance of Lily Bart in "The House of Mirth." After her have come Helena Ritchie, Beatrix Buchanan, Audrey Craven, and Sylvia Landis, altogether forming a group of women made interesting not so much because of fundamental differences of character as because of the differences of aims and environment which were primarily the causes of the

peculiar temptations to which they were individually subjected. It may be that, in matters of detail, no one of them would have acted just as the others did under the same circumstances, and therefore it may appear to a superficial observer that they all belong to separate and distinct types. In so far as they sought a variety of objects this conclusion is correct, but their methods were the same, their obliviousness to matters of principle was the same, and their eagerness to save appearances, to conform outwardly to conventions, was, in the case of all of them, equally strong. Therefore there is no essential ground for making any discriminations between them, and their interest centers in matters which were external to them.

A new character has been introduced into this field by F. Marion Crawford in his latest book entitled, "A Lady of Rome," Maria Montalto belongs distinctly in another class from that which includes the women of Mrs. Wharton, Mr. Chambers, Mrs. Deland, and Miss Sinclair, because she is a woman with whom principle is of more importance than the gratification of her own wishes.

Her special problem will seem simple

enough to a disinterested observer, particularly when it is remembered that, after her one error, the mainspring of her life was her sincere purpose to do right. No one, even the sternest moralist, could criticize the plan she arranged with Castiglione in the abstract, for, if they had had the power to carry it into execution, and to adhere consistently to their agreement, no harm would have been done. But the weight of the testimony of human experience was against it, and that she could have conceived of such an idea does more credit to her innocence than to her knowledge of human nature.

Fortunately for her, before the test came, Montalto's offer of reconciliation arrived, clarifying the situation and demonstrating its impossibility.

Though there is nothing especially novel in the complication—namely, the question of the practicability of maintaining a purely platonic relation between a man and a woman—it seems to us that in this latest exhibition of feminine psychology, Mr. Crawford has presented in Maria Montalto a much more attractive and interesting portrait than has appeared in any of the other women referred to.



With all the opportunities for satire afforded by the bustle of the strenuous life, its bluster over superficial things and brag about small ones, it seems odd that they have not been used to more purpose.

One of the few attempts that have been made to do so is in Bert L. Taylor's story, "The Charlatans," Bobbs-Merrill Company. Mr. Taylor has taken the special form of sham culture which finds its expression in musical education. This branch of "art" is perhaps more vulnerable to this kind of attack because the pretensions which it fosters are more obvious to the average mind, and its votaries more absurd.

Hope Winston, a country girl with talent and aspirations as a musician, is the victim, and an institution known as the Colossus Conservatory of Music is the machine. The Colossus is a place

where an instrumentalist or a vocalist is manufactured out of any sort of material that presents itself; it has "more departments, more world-renowned instructors, more educational methods than any other." Doctor Rudolph Erdman is its director, Professor Van Wart instructor of the pianoforte, Professor Geist, violinist and teacher of theory; and Doctor Dudensack and Professor Notensatt help to create and preserve impressions of the Conservatory's greatness.

Churchill Gray, a musical critic, who sees through the shams and makes little effort to conceal his contempt for them, at first includes Hope in them, because she is a pupil there, but finds out his mistake, and all ends happily.

In "The Call of the Blood," published by Harper's, Robert Hichens has surpassed the excellence of the work he did in "The Garden of Allah." As its title implies, the story is a study in heredity, but it is not encumbered with any scientific discussion of the influence

any scientific discussion of the influence of atavistic tendencies; the reader is credited with sufficient intelligence to draw his own inferences.

· No great degree of acumen is needed to foresee that nothing but disaster could result from the marriage of Hermione Lester and Maurice Delarey, for it was a union of absolutely incongruous elements based upon an attraction for relatively unimportant and superficial details: indeed, if there is any improbability in the story, it is that a woman of Hermione's intelligence and appreciation of value, combined with her physical plainness-always an aid to feminine judgment-should have been misled as she was. Delarey's Sicilian ancestry, derived through his grandmother, made him an impossible husband for the intellectual, high-minded Englishwoman, and that the crisis came before the honeymoon ended is a tribute to Mr. Hichens' artistic sense. She herself unwittingly precipitated the catastrophe by choosing the Sicilian villa as the scene of her first weeks of wedded life.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the book is Mr. Hichens' description of the effect upon Delarey of his Sicilian environment. The spirit of the island is so subtly vet logically developed, that the reader not only is conscious of the irresistible response in Delarey, but is also brought under its spell himself, and knows that the outcome is inevitable. Artois, Hermione's oldest friend, a big man, physically, intellectually, and morally, is a counter-balance in the story to the volatile Delarey, and his place in the lives of the other two is one which he occupies by reason of the necessities of the case.

The story is told deliberately and with great restraint, but the narrative does not drag on that account. Every touch, however slight or delicate, has a vital significance in the upbuilding of the tale, the growth of which is organic

even if it seems slow.



"The Beloved Vagabond," by William J. Locke, John Lane Company, will doubtless recall "Tricotrin" to the memories of admirers of Ouida, not that the book is anything like an imitation of the old, but because of the similarity of ideals in Tricotrin and Paragot.

Paragot or Gaston de Nerac is a vagabond because he is fundamentally in revolt against the tyranny of the great god of "British Respectability," though it is open to the reader to doubt if he would ever have been more than vaguely conscious of the yoke if he had married Joanna Rushworth instead of giving her up to the Comte de Verneuil, in which case there would, of course, have been no story to tell.

His view of life and his comments thereon, his adventures with Asticot and Blanquette, and his habits are, it is true, not of the sort that we wish our children to be trained to emulate, but, tempered by his lovable human qualities, they make very readable and entertaining fiction; so long as we know we are not reading about a character of real life, we can enjoy being with him as much as his protégés, Asticot and Blanquette, did.

His valiant effort to make himself worthy of Joanna, after the death of her husband, showed only the effects of his early training; but the conventional restraints of Melford proved to be more than his nature could endure, and he went back to his wandering life in time to save her years of bitter disappointment.

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"The Perfect Tribute," by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, Charles Scribner's Sons, is a story of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, and is interesting mainly because of the emphasis that it throws upon a phase of Lincoln's character. Though the incident described in the story is purely imaginative, it is one which might easily be true in every detail, and for that very reason it must arrest attention.

His misunderstanding of the reception given to his words at the dedication of the battle-field, and the bitter disappointment that it brought him, and the manner in which he was undeceived by the incident in the hospital, are so significant of the man's nature, that Mrs. Andrews' tale might well be a narrative of actual facts. Therefore her conception of the idea as a piece of fiction is something like inspiration.



Miriam Michelson's versatility is again shown in her latest book, "Anthony Overman," published by Doubleday, Page & Co., which is as different from "In the Bishop's Carriage" and "The Madigans" as they were from each other.

For her principal character she has taken an impractical dreamer, a man who seeks to compass, by the familiar method of community life, impossible reforms, for the benefit of humanity, and who has had thrown into his life a woman who, superficially, at least, represents the opposite of almost everything that he believes in. Jessie Incell is a twentieth-century newspaper woman, who has no conscientious scruples about betraying confidences or doing other things to secure a "scoop" for her

paper. Her first meeting with Overman is on an assignment to interview him regarding the circumstances of the failure of his community. In spite of their apparently irreconcilable differences of opinion as to the significance of life, which provoke something like contempt on her part and pity on his, the encounter marks the beginning of an attraction which, aided by circumstances, grows into an attachment, and finally leads to compromises on both sides and ultimate agreement.

The story, while it is one of intense interest, is, in a sense, a disappointing one, because it is obvious that Miss Michelson has failed to use her theme and the strong situations growing out of it to the fullest advantage. While perhaps it is too much to say that the book lacks logical coherence, it is unquestionable that there are many places in which the narrative is so loosely knit together that it gives the impression sometimes of incongruity; the thought occasionally seems only partly digested.

Nevertheless, it should prove extremely interesting, and is a book which, on the whole, is well worth while.

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It is possible that the real persons belonging to the class that "Shorty McCabe" represents do not ordinarily talk as he is made to talk by Mr. Sewell Ford; it is at least reasonable to suppose that very few of them are capable of the sustained effort in monologue that he displays. Nevertheless, Mr. Ford has made him tell his story in a manner sufficiently true to life to make it convincing as well as entertaining.

Any one familiar with the varieties of human life along the Tenderloin district of Broadway, will have little difficulty in classifying Shorty McCabe, in spite of the fact that in him the type to which he belongs is somewhat idealized. To the "dead game sport" embodied in the retired prize-fighter, Broadway represents the acme of all earthly—and perhaps even heavenly—bliss; he can understand, if no one else

can, Shorty's feelings when he said: "Most of the fancy thinkin' I've ever done has been along that line—how to get back to Broadway."

Shorty is a genuine rough diamond, and not so very rough, either. heart he is a gentleman; he has his standards of right and wrong; standards that, possibly, might not always satisfy people of greater piety than his, but he adheres to them with a tenacity that is not always found among those who insist upon what they conceive to be higher purposes. His friendships with Pinckney and other social lights reflect more credit upon them than upon him. Sadie, who, as he says, is "a real hand-picked pippin," justified his faith in her at the end, and demonstrated that her ambitions were not her only interest in life.

The book is published by Mitchell Kennerley.

A biography in the true sense of the word is a peculiarly difficult undertaking if it is to be of any real value. It implies a good deal more than the collection and arrangement of mere facts. Almost anybody can arrange a catalogue of events, but it requires something near genius to paint a portrait, and the biographer should combine with his literary training the understanding and sympathy of the artist; and even then the effects may be false or misleading, unless he is blessed with a sensitive appreciation of relative values.

Mr. H. C. Chatfield-Taylor has shown many indications of his qualification for the task in his biography of Molière, published by Duffield & Co. He has presented in his book a picture of the great French playwright which carries conviction. He has adhered closely to undisputed facts, presented impartially both sides of controverted questions, carefully refrained from drawing unfounded inferences, and, more important than anything else, has not neglected the essentially human side of his subject. Moreover, his book discloses an intelligent understanding of the special conditions of French society and politics; conditions which provoked Molière's genius for the refinement of burlesque or farce into genuine comedv.

Mr. Chatfield-Taylor has given a graphic review of one of the most absorbing periods of French history, the interest of which he has enhanced by a faithful picture of a strong human per-

sonality.

"The Avenging Hour" is the title of a book which, in some respects, is the most unusual one that has been presented for review in a good while. H. F. Prevost-Battersby is the author, and D. Appleton & Co. the publishers. It is unusual because a single incident, of a character next to impossible, absorbs nearly one-half of the book, and is worked up with a poetic feeling and a positive beauty of style such as to dull, if not destroy, all sense of improbability. The circumstances of the meeting of Owen Davenant and Rose St. Osvth are commonplace enough, but the progress of their acquaintance up to and including the crisis, which immediately precedes the discovery of their relationship, is, to put it mildly, anything but commonplace. Yet it is handled with such consummate art and with such a depth of genuine sentiment that it does not occur to the reader until it is all over just what he has been beguiled into believing. Then the awakening which comes to Owen and Rose is shared by the reader, and, though the same convincing sort of narrative is continued for a chapter or two more, the unreality of it all is more apparent.

After Devenant leaves Rose to go back to London, there is a distinct falling off in the quality of the tale. It produces the impression irresistibly of a waning interest in his story on the part of the author, and of a feeling that he must get the work out of the way to attend to something more important. He has got Rose and Davenant into trouble, and has barely time to get them out; they must be pulled out somehow, and the method is of small considera-

Thus the conclusion does not tion. follow in inevitable sequence.

Nevertheless, we venture to predict that no one will begin the book without reading it to the end with the feeling that he has been amply repaid.

Justus Miles Forman has added nothing to his literary reputation by his last book, "Buchanan's Wife," published by Harper & Bros. So far as the plot is concerned it is a series of absurd impossibilities from beginning to end: the situation with which it opens and that with which it concludes are beyond the bounds of reason.

The theme is the threadbare Enoch Arden story with variations. Possibly the vagaries of the style in which it is written were resorted to because the author was conscious of this; his peculiar iteration and reiteration of the word "very" is a symptom of infirmity of substance as well as being an in-

firmity of itself.

Altogether, the book is creditable to no one concerned in it.

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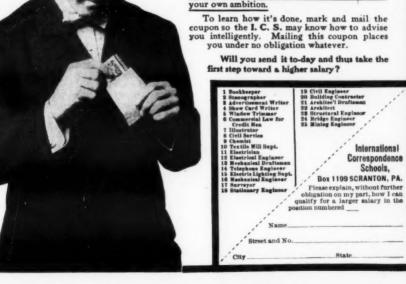
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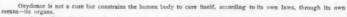
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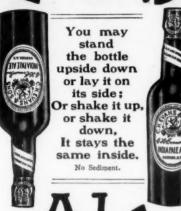
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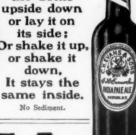
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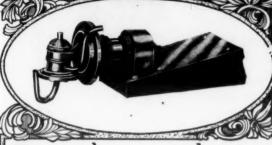


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